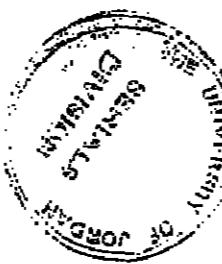


'Israeli Watergate' reported

TEL AVIV (AP) — The opposition Labour Party demanded a police inquiry Sunday following a newspaper report that supporters of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's Likud bloc broke into Labour headquarters to steal information. The daily *Maariv*, which broke the story Friday, called it the "Israeli Watergate." The paper claimed that three months before the 1988 general election, private investigators broke into Labour election headquarters at a Tel Aviv hotel, photographed documents and passed them to the Likud. The paper voiced suspicions that Police Minister Rovi Milo, chairman of the Likud 1988 election campaign, may have been involved in the affair. Mr. Milo's spokesman Ram Levy said that "as far as the minister knows the published story never occurred." Likud spokesman Gil Samsom denied the party was involved. "The Likud doesn't know anything about the whole affair and if someone brought in the material we don't know anything about it," Mr. Samsom said. Labour party leader Shimon Peres demanded an investigation, saying Maariv "cannot be left up in the air." Party spokesman Shmuel Algrabi said Labour was asking police to act. The party also demanded a parliamentary debate, but Speaker Dov Shilansky refused.



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جordan Times يومية سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية (الرأي)

Volume 16 Number 4677

AMMAN MONDAY, APRIL 15 1991, SHAWAL 1, 1411

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Sabah family member admits drug smuggling

CAIRO (R) — A member of Kuwait's ruling family admitted Sunday that he smuggled heroin into Egypt but denied he was a drug trafficker. "I brought in the heroin from Syria for my own use," Sheikh Talal Nasser Al Sabah, a second cousin to Kuwait's emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, told reporters. "I burn 30-40 grammes of heroin daily. I am not selling it," a tired and shaky Sheikh Talal said after questioning by drug prosecutors (see page 2).

Algerian hijacker stands trial

ALGIERS (R) — A man who tried to hijack a French airliner on a flight from Paris to Algiers last August went on trial in Algiers Sunday. Fayed Abdul Nasser Jamal, 30, an Algerian emigrant merchant under an expulsion order from France, threatened the pilot of the Air France aircraft with "weapons" which turned out to be a cake of soap and a can of shaving cream. He gave himself up when the plane landed. He said he wanted to draw attention to the plight of Lebanese during the civil war, calling for an international conference on the conflict. After an argument over the use of Arabic, which is obligatory at Algerian trials, the court adjourned the case to an unspecified date.

British attache leaves Algeria

ALGIERS (R) — A British military attache in Algeria has been moved to another post. Algerian Radio said the government asked him to leave the country. A source close to the British embassy in Algiers said Royal Air Force Group Captain William Cross left Algiers on Friday after nine months in the post to take a job in another country. State radio said Capt. Cross was caught in the Birine region south of Algiers in possession of a camera, "knowing that the taking of photographs is prohibited in this area." A spokesman for the embassy said he had no comment on the Algerian Radio report that Capt. Cross was asked to leave the country.

EC plans talks with Israel, Turkey

LUXEMBOURG (R) — Luxembourg's Prime Minister Jacques Santer, whose country is current president of the European Community (EC), will meet Israeli and Turkish leaders in London Monday, he said Sunday. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had requested a meeting with Mr. Santer, who will be in London for inaugural meetings of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Mr. Santer will also have talks with Turkish Prime Minister Yildirim Akbulut.

Israel departs Ethiopian girl

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel has deported a 16-year-old Ethiopian girl after discovering she was not Jewish, immigration officials said Sunday. "She came here on false pretences. She was presented as being Jewish when she was not," said a spokesman for the Jewish Agency, which brings immigrants to Israel. He said the girl had stated she was the daughter of a Jewish Ethiopian couple in order to acquire immigration papers. Ethiopian Jews may immigrate to Israel under a family reunification programme. In March, Ethiopia temporarily suspended the emigration and accused Israeli authorities in Addis Ababa of giving visas to non-Jews.

72 wounded from Mali in Libya

NICOSIA (R) — Seventy-two people from Mali arrived in Libya Saturday for treatment to wounds received during last month's revolt against former President Moussa Traore, the Libyan news agency JANA said Sunday. They were flown on a Libyan plane, said JANA, monitored in Cyprus. A Libyan medical team was due to fly to Mali.

U.S. begins Iraq pullout

Combined agency dispatches

THE UNITED States Sunday began pulling back all its troops in southern Iraq to a newly established demilitarised zone along the Iraq-Kuwait border, the U.S. central command announced.

Many of the troops would move on to bases in Saudi Arabia for immediate return home, said a U.S. command spokesman on condition of anonymity.

Defence Secretary Dick Cheney confirmed the order to pull back the U.S.-based first Infantry Division and the European-based Third Armoured Division, from their current positions south of the Euphrates River.

"Within the next several days we'll be out of southern Iraq except for the demilitarised strip reaching 10 kilometres into Iraq from the Kuwait border," Mr. Cheney told NBC television in Washington.

"Our forces are now pulling back to that buffer zone and will stay there until the blue-helmeted force arrives from the U.N.," Mr. Cheney said. Under the Gulf war ceasefire terms, a United

Nations peacekeeping force is to monitor the 200-kilometre border, but the timing has not been set.

The U.S. command reported that U.S. troop strength in the Gulf had dropped Sunday to 295,000 from a peak of 540,000 at the height of the Gulf war, which ended Feb. 28.

Mr. Cheney reiterated a U.S. pledge, made earlier by President George Bush, to continue sending relief supplies to refugees stranded on Iraq's borders.

"We'll continue that effort until international organisations are able to take over," Mr. Cheney said, at least "for the next several days."

"We're the only ones capable of providing this kind of assistance," Mr. Cheney told interviewer Gerrick Utley. "Our major effort right now, Gerrick, is of course in the south where we are providing for those people who fled to Safwan and down along the Kuwaiti border."

He said there were also major efforts, with the British and French, in Turkey and along Iraq's northern border with Turkey, to air drop food, water and other supplies to the refugees.

"Eventually it's the kind of effort I think ought to be taken over by international relief organisations," Mr. Cheney said. But, he said, "we clearly are not going to withdraw and end the effort in a way that leaves those people vulnerable."

The U.S. command said in a communiqué that allied forces would "continue to protect and provide humanitarian assistance to refugees in the demilitarised zone, to include the refugees at Safwan."

It also invited any other refugees in the area formerly occupied by the Americans to move into the demilitarised zone for assistance and protection if they so desired.

The command did not give the numbers of troops involved in the Iraq pullout. Each division numbers from 15,000 to 20,000 troops, plus supporting elements such as transportation units.

A 1,440-member U.N. peacekeeping force, the first elements of which arrived in Kuwait Saturday, is to take over patrolling the demilitarised zone.

The command said the allied

(Continued on page 4)

Saddam visits north, urges Kurds to return

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQI PRESIDENT SADDAM Hussein has told Kurds who fled Iraq after their month-long rebellion was crushed that they can go home without fear of reprisal, except for murderers, rapists and thieves.

The president's message was delivered in the Kurdish town of Erbil Saturday when he made his first visit to the region since the rebellion was crushed last month.

The visit was splashed on the front pages of Iraq's official newspapers Sunday. It stressed that Kurds who merely voiced support for the rebels during street demonstrations had nothing to fear from the authorities.

"What is past is past. We are starting anew," President Saddam told the deputy governor of Erbil province and members of the ruling Baath Party there.

"Let everyone return to their home town and people and let us start anew."

"The killers, the violators of

people's honour and those who stole the assets of the state and the people and have not returned them — we do not give guarantees to those people."

He told officials in the Kurdish autonomous region which covers the provinces of Erbil, Sulaimaniya and Dohuk, to spread the message.

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"Let everyone return to their home town and people and let us start anew."

"The killers, the violators of

and unrest by Shiites in southern Iraq."

A delegation from the United Nations has begun talks with Iraq Sunday on ways of easing the plight of the refugees.

"I outlined the views of the United Nations," the leader of the U.N. team, Eric Suy, told Reuters. "It has to do with the displaced persons."

Mr. Suy began his talks on Saturday by meeting the head of the Foreign Ministry department dealing with international organisations.

He met Prime Minister Saadoun Hammadi and other members of his government on Sunday.

He said ordinary Kurds had nothing to fear even if they had been caught up in the unrest. "He who has been forced to leave his home and support the rebels in demonstrations or who shouted with them is pardoned."

Iran and Turkey say two million Iraqis have sought sanctuary on their territory after the crushing of the Kurdish rebellion

(Continued on page 4)

Italian government gets off to shaky start

ROME (R) — Politicians from left to right gave Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti's new coalition a thumbs down Sunday, reflecting internal dissent that brought down his last government on March 29.

Dubbed a stop-gap government by the press, his coalition got off to a shaky start when one party walked out, leaving three ministers vacant even before it was sworn in Saturday.

Even Mr. Andreotti's own ministers commented sarcastically on the fiasco for Italy's 50th post-war government, which left him holding the portfolios rejected by the Republican Party.

"This government was born prematurely and it's therefore going to have to spend some time in the incubator," said Socialist Deputy Premier Claudio Martelli.

It was Mr. Andreotti's Socialist allies who provoked the crisis in February by vetoing cabinet reshuffle. In the end, the two-month crisis produced little else.

"New government, old faces," commented one newspaper. "Interim government," the financial daily *Il Sole-24 Ore* proc-

esses.

The latest rift between the two neighbours echoed the animosity of their 1980-88 war.

Baghdad accused Tehran of inciting twin rebellions by Shiites in south Iraq and Kurds in the north of the country. They were crushed by Iraqi government forces, triggering a massive exodus of refugees to Turkey and Iran.

On Friday, Baghdad challenged Tehran's assertion that it

was ready to return 22 Iraqi aircraft which fled to Iran during the Gulf war to escape destruction by the allies' air and missile attacks. It said 148 of its planes had fled to Iran.

The rift ended a short period of improvement in ties which began soon after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August last year. Iraq was neutral in the Gulf war.

An Iranian newspaper urged the Tehran government Sunday not to return the Iraqi planes.

Kayhan International contended the Iraqi government of President Saddam Hussein had no right to the aircraft because it no longer represented the Iraqi people.

"Tehran should never return the Iraqi military planes ... as long as the person of Saddam rules," said the English-language newspaper.

"The planes belong to the Iraqi people ..."

The Iranian Foreign Ministry Sunday protested to Iraq's charge d'affaires in Tehran about the Iraqi figure for the number of aircraft, which he described as untrue.

"A Foreign Ministry official today warned the Iraqi charge d'affaires that such erroneous claims raised by Iraqi officials would mislead world public opinion," the Iranian News Agency IRNA said.

On Friday, Baghdad challenged Tehran's assertion that it

(Continued on page 4)



Aga Khan en route to Iraq

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the executive envoy of United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar for humanitarian affairs, arrived Sunday in Amman on his way to Baghdad where he will hold talks with Iraqi officials on the post-war situation in Iraq.

Prince Aga Khan said in a statement upon arrival at the airport that his visit to Iraq comes within the framework of implementing the U.N. humanitarian programme which aims to extend aid to those affected by the recent incidents in Iraq.

He said his tour in the region might include Iran and Turkey to inspect the conditions of Iraqi refugees there.

The U.N. envoy was received in the airport by the director of the office of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. Dr. Michel Hamarneh, and several representatives of international organisations in Amman.

In Baghdad, the United Nations and the government Sunday discussed ways of alleviating the plight of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis.

Happy 'Eid Al Fitr

AMMAN (J.T.) — Chief Islamic Justice Mohammad Mihelan announced Sunday that the moon of Shawal had been sighted and "Eid Al Fitr begins Monday. The government has declared a five-day holiday to mark the 'Eid. All ministries and government departments will resume work on Saturday.

The Jordan times will not be published on Tuesday and Wednesday. The next issue of the paper will appear on Thursday. The Jordan Times wishes its readers and advertisers a very happy 'Eid Al Fitr.

Aziz holds talks with Masri, leaves for home

AMMAN (AP) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz met Sunday with Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri and discussed post-Gulf war Middle East strategy, a source said.

Mr. Aziz, who arrived in Amman late Sunday night after rounding up a tour to Sudan and Yemen, departed on a 12-hour land trip to Baghdad.

This was Mr. Aziz's second visit to Jordan within three days — coinciding with the departure and return of Mr. Masri after Middle East peace talks with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Geneva Friday.

An informed source said Mr. Aziz's talks Sunday "centered on Middle East peace strategy in the aftermath of the Gulf war."

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the source refused to disclose further information about Aziz-Masri talks saying they were "confidential."

An Iraqi embassy official said Mr. Aziz's visit to Jordan "was not official. He came here only to continue his route by land to Baghdad."

On Thursday, Mr. Aziz was received by His Majesty King Hussein, Prime Minister Mudar Badran and other Jordanian officials also met with Mr. Aziz and discussed Iraq's reconstruction plans.

Shamir dusts off 'autonomy' plan, offers it to Palestinians

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir Sunday offered Palestinians limited self-rule in the occupied territories, as outlined in the 1978 accords with Egypt which Palestinians rejected.

Mr. Shamir flew to London where he is to meet Soviet Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov (see page 2). At an airport news conference, he said he would urge the Soviet Union to restore full diplomatic relations with Israel and present his positions on peace talks.

"... In the negotiations for Camp David accords we spoke of full autonomy for Palestinians. And there was an impressive list of the powers they will receive in all the areas of life except for some things which make the difference between the type of rule they will receive and an independent state."

Mr. Shamir and his advisers said the proposal was not new but based on the 1978 Camp David accords under which Israel and Egypt agreed that Palestinians in the occupied territories should be granted an interim period of limited self rule.

According to that agreement, Palestinians would control internal affairs but not security or foreign affairs. Mr. Shamir said offices set up to manage these internal affairs would be the equivalent of ministries.

Mr. Shamir said his proposal would let Palestinians set up ministries for police, culture, education, trade, justice and health. They would take charge of their own matters except for foreign affairs and defence.

"The security services would remain ours," he was quoted as saying. He said the sides would have to discuss creating political parties and newspapers in the occupied territories.

Palestinian leaders rejected the Camp David accords and the autonomy plan has not yet been implemented. In May 1989, Israeli proposed elections in the occupied territories to choose representatives to negotiate self-rule with Israel.

Mr. Shamir said he would explain Israel's ideas for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict to Mr. Pavlov in London.

"We made the participation of the Soviet Union in providing auspices in a regular meeting between Israel and the Arab World conditional on full normalisation of diplomatic relations. Of course we will talk about this," Mr. Shamir said.

The Soviet Union severed ties

Arafat said to reject regional conference

RABAT (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat has rejected U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's proposal for a regional Middle East peace conference.

Thousands of lives said at risk in impending famine in Sudan

NICOSIA (R) — A plan to save the lives of thousands threatened with famine in southern Sudan has been so held up by the government that Western donor states are considering going ahead without official approval.

Relief officials in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, said on Sunday that hundreds, possibly thousands of southern Sudanese would die within three months unless famine relief was rushed to their war-stricken region.

The officials, contacted by telephone, said they were so alarmed by the delay and worried about loss of life that they were considering giving the military government of Omar Hassan Al Bashir an ultimatum.

They said they feared a repeat of 1988 when a quarter of a million southern Sudanese died from hunger and malnutrition aggravated by years of civil war in the vast region.

The officials said a blueprint for a relief operation was submitted to the government three weeks ago after months of tough talks over details but there has been no response.

Unless the government moved quickly, the donors would order the launch of a cross-border relief operation for the south without Khartoum's official go-ahead, the relief officials said.

Such an operation would be primarily targeted at rebel-held areas and would use neighbour-

ing Kenya, Uganda and the Central African Republic as bases, they said.

The three black African nations are often at odds with Sudan and known to be sympathetic to southern Sudanese rebels, who say they champion the rights of the animist and Christian south against domination by the Arabised Muslim north.

"The donors have already started to call it the 'relief by force' option," said one official. "They hope to obtain some sort of an international mandate to do so on humanitarian grounds."

Sudan's relief policies have in recent months been sharply criticised by the United States, Britain and the European Community, the country's three main relief donors.

Its sympathy with Iraq over the Gulf crisis and alleged human rights violations by the government, in power since a civilian administration was toppled in a coup led by Gen. Bashir in 1989, has led to its relative isolation abroad.

"Unless food goes now, heavy casualties will occur within three months," said one senior relief official who recently returned from a United Nations-sponsored survey of south Sudan.

"People are already dying, but hundreds, and possibly thousands, will die soon if food does not reach them."

"There is an obvious absence of a spirit of peace on the part of

the government," said one relief official who took part in the talks with the government.

He said the government was taking an increasingly hardline stand on the southern rebellion and the work of foreign relief workers in Sudan.

Gen. Bashir's government abruptly ended a U.N.-led relief operation for the south in December and had earlier accused relief workers of aiding rebels and undermining security.

The war in the south, the second since an earlier, 17-year bout of civil strife ended in 1972, has forced more than three million southerners to flee their homes.

U.N. bodies and voluntary relief organisations believe an estimated 7.5 million people face acute hunger in Sudan this year. They say 1.2 million tonnes of food supplies are needed for 1991 to head off widespread deaths.

They said 500,000 tonnes were needed for southern areas and garrison towns held by the army, while 200,000 more should go to areas controlled by the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army.

The crisis, which Gen. Bashir's government has called a "food gap," is the result of a drought, resultant crop failures and civil strife.

The absence of a plan of action for the south means that zero amount of food has been pledged so far for the area," said one U.N. relief worker.

Shamir to meet Pavlov, Major

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is to meet for the first time this week with his Soviet counterpart, Valentin S. Pavlov, and is expected to push for full diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, government officials said Sunday.

The meeting with Mr. Pavlov — as well as European leaders including British Prime Minister John Major — are to take place during a two-day visit to London.

The central purpose of his trip is to attend the Monday inauguration of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The financial institution is being set up to help rebuild the economies of Eastern Europe.

Government officials, who insisted on anonymity, said Mr. Shamir was likely to urge Mr. Pavlov to push for restoration of full diplomatic relations.

Israel has made restoration of relations a condition for the Soviets joining any Middle East peace process.

The Soviet Union broke diplomatic ties with Israel after the 1967 Middle East war.

Relations between the two countries have warmed over the past several years. Late last year the countries' missions were raised to consular status.

Meantime, thousands of Soviet Jews have immigrated to Israel since the Soviet Union relaxed exit policies in the spring of 1989. So far, more than 230,000 Soviets have arrived, and government officials predict that between 200,000 and 300,000 Soviet Jews will come this year.

Government officials said Shamir also planned meeting with political leaders from Romania, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Bulgaria.

Israel is seeking to improve its relations with European nations in advance of the 1992 economic unification of the European Community. Israel wants special trading status with the community.

The government officials said Mr. Shamir probably would brief Major and other European officials on his recent talks with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker on Middle East peace prospects.

Israel has proposed a regional conference to get negotiations under way. It has ruled out an international conference — which would include European participation.

Member of Al Sabah family held for heroin trafficking

CAIRO (Agencies) — A member of the ruling Kuwaiti family has been arrested with nearly one kilogramme of heroin in his possession, a newspaper and a police officer said Sunday.

Daily Al Ahram newspaper, in a front-page report, said Sheikh Talal Nasser Al Sabah was arrested in his furnished flat Saturday night. A Syrian man, Abdou Ahmad Na'im, was also arrested.

Al Ahram said undercover narcotics agents posing as drug dealers had offered to buy one million pounds (\$300,000) worth of heroin from Sheikh Talal. They arrested him as the transaction took place and found three quarters of a kilogramme of heroin in his flat.

A police officer at the narcotics department confirmed Sheikh Talal's arrest. The narcotics prosecutor's office said no charges had been filed and that the interrogation of Sheikh Talal and the Syrian was to start later Sunday.

Sheikh Talal's exact relationship to Kuwait's Al Sabah royal family was not immediately known.

Al Ahram said that preliminary investigations showed that Sheikh Talal was allegedly a heroin addict who resorted to trading in drugs to keep up with his expenses. The investigations said he had the

heroin in his baggage which usually went unchecked at airports because of the Al Sabah name.

If charged and convicted, the Kuwaiti and Syrian could face the death penalty.

"They will stand before prosecutors on Sunday," one officer said.

The police said they had been keeping an eye on Sheikh Talal, who visited Egypt often. They said he was a heroin addict and became a trafficker to maintain his lavish lifestyle.

"He used to hide the heroin in his luggage, taking advantage of the good treatment members of the Al Sabah family got at Egyptian entry ports," the officer said. Police said Sheikh Talal and his Syrian partner were selling the heroin for almost \$31,000.

Sheikh Talal, police said, would not get any special treatment because he was a member of the Al Sabah family.

Kuwaiti embassy officials could not immediately be reached.

Egypt began a serious crackdown on drug traffickers in 1989 after thousands of its young took to drugs and Cairo's maze-like alleys and backstreets teemed with hundreds of drug peddlers.

It executed its first convicted drug smuggler, a Pakistani, in July 1989.

Karami: Force will not be used to disarm Palestinians

BEIRUT (R) — Prime Minister Omar Karami, in a policy shift, said in remarks published Sunday the Lebanese government would not use force to disarm Palestinian guerrillas.

"We have informed the Palestinians, and previously the Lebanese militiamen, that we do not have the intention of using force (to disarm them)," Mr. Karami said.

The Syrian-backed government of President Elias Hrawi last month ordered all the country's private armies, Lebanese and non-Lebanese, to disband by the end of April or face being crushed by the army and Syrian troops.

Palestinian officials, arguing that they need their guns to defend Lebanon's 13 refugee camps and liberate Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon, have vowed not to surrender their weapons.

The government sent an envoy, Mohsen Ibrahim, to Tunis and Algiers last week for talks with the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Algerian mediators to discuss disarming Lebanon's 10,000 Palestinian fighters.

"Palestinians (in Lebanon) are our guests and their cause is ours," Mr. Karami said in the interview.

"That is why we want to arrive together and through dialogue at solutions that preserve the rights

of the Palestinians on condition that our independence and sovereignty are not touched."

Mr. Karami said the government was also in talks with the Lebanese militias which were "cooperating and understanding."

The premier said France was exerting pressure on Lebanon to allow General Michel Aoun leave his sanctuary at the French embassy in Beirut for asylum in Paris.

Gen. Aoun, who defied the authority of Mr. Hrawi for 11 months, sought refuge at the embassy on Oct. 13 last year after he was bombed out of the presidential palace by Syrian planes.

Paris granted him political asylum but Mr. Hrawi said he wanted to try him as a war criminal and asked him to return some \$35 million of the state's money.

"France is pressing to release him as a political refugee in France. Before anything, he should be handed over to the judiciary," Mr. Karami said.

"The method in which (Paris) is dealing with this issue is an infringement of Lebanon's sovereignty and dignity," he said.

"The issue of the money is part of the problem, but they are portraying us as running behind money... the basic element of (Aoun's) problem is the political aspect and breaking the law," Mr. Karami said.

Gandhi defends India's neutrality in Gulf war



NEW DELHI (AP) — Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the front runner in India's May election, said Saturday he did not regret India's neutrality in the Gulf war, and any government he heads will keep an independent foreign policy.

"When another country is at war, we should remain nonaligned," he said, justifying India's withdrawal of refuelling rights to U.S. planes en route to the Gulf.

The United States, he said, must understand that "India is a developing country. Our perspective and our priorities have to be different."

Although he was not in office during the Gulf war, Mr. Gandhi was responsible for pressing Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar to raise objections to U.S. warplanes refuelling in India.

Mr. Gandhi also said he had no regrets about his unsuccessful trip to the Soviet Union and Iran, in which he had hoped to launch a mediation mission by nonaligned countries.

Critics accused the government, which Mr. Gandhi's congress party supported, of misreading the war and of being too uncritical of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Gandhi spoke to foreign reporters on the spacious lawn of his official residence a day after the election commission announced the timing of parliamentary elections. They will be held May 20, 23 and 26, and the results will be announced May 31.

More than 500 million people are eligible to vote, making it the world's largest exercise in democracy.

Mr. Gandhi was prime minister for five years after the 1984 assassination of his mother, Indira Gandhi. In the 1989 elections, Congress remained the largest party, but it relinquished power to an alliance of smaller parties.

Since campaigning began four weeks ago, analysts say the Congress party's prospects have sharply improved. Mr. Gandhi confidently predicted winning a majority.

Signalling a shift in election tactics, he singled out prices as the key issue of the election campaign. Until now, Congress has focused on the instability of the two minority governments which served briefly and resigned since Gandhi left office.

"The economy has to be brought back on track," Mr. Gandhi said, hinting at greater liberalisation if his party returns to power.

India's inflation rose last year to 12 per cent from about 8 per cent, and some surveys say food prices rose by 20 per cent. Its cash reserves have sunk so low that it may default on loans for the first time since independence in 1947.

Mr. Gandhi criticised his two successors, V.P. Singh and Chandra Shekhar, for allowing India's international standing to slide. Both Mr. Singh and Chandra Shekhar have admitted having no experience and little interest in foreign affairs.

Mr. Gandhi also complained that the system of running the United Nations is "just not adequate," and said a revamping was needed. "The United Nations needs to be much more mobile," he said. India is a non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council.

Italy

(Continued from page 1)

claimed, sharing the view that the four-party cabinet would survive only long enough to organise new elections.

"This new government is even weaker and more divided than the previous ones," said Achille Occhetto, the former Communist chief who leads the renamed Democratic Party of the Left.

The Republicans deserted Mr. Andreotti at the last minute, testing to let him keep the two ministries they held in his previous government.

Nixon talks tough against Iraqi leader

NEW YORK (R) — Former U.S. President Richard Nixon has said he would order the assassination of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein if he were still in the White House.

In the transcript of a U.S. television interview aired Sunday, Mr. Nixon also said Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev might have missed his chance to change his country.

Mr. Nixon, 78, called President Saddam "an international menace" and would be a "threat to peace and stability in the area," within five years if he stayed in power.

"If I could find a way to get him out of there, even putting a contract out on him, if the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) still did that sort of a thing, assuming it ever did, I would be for it," Mr. Nixon said.

The term "contract" is U.S. organised crime jargon for a hired killing.

Mr. Nixon, the only U.S. president to resign from office, was known as a tough-minded international negotiator during his time as U.S. leader from 1969 to 1974.

If President Saddam were willing to leave Iraq in exchange for an agreement not to be prosecuted for "war crimes," Mr. Nixon said he would be "greatly tempted" to agree to the deal.

Speaking of Mr. Gorbachev, whom Mr. Nixon met during a recent visit to the Soviet Union, the former president said Soviet citizens felt he was "weak."

"They said he was indecisive. They said he was a talker, rather than a doer. One of them described him... as a brutal wimp," he said.

Mr. Gorbachev made "a fundamental error in turning to reactionaries in order to keep power, when by continuing to work with reformers, he could make a new Soviet Union," he said.

"Mr. Nixon said Boris Yeltsin, the Russian Federation president who is considered Mr. Gorbachev's chief rival, had "animal magnetism" and was a "formidable political personality."

Since his resignation Mr. Nixon has written several books and emerged as an elder statesman who often comments on public events.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel says troops killed two guerrillas

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli troops killed two Arab guerrillas in a clash Sunday in South Lebanon, the army command said. The incident occurred as the soldiers were patrolling in the western sector of Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone," the army said in a communiqué. It said two guerrillas were killed and that Israeli troops sustained no injuries. No other details were released. Israel carved out the 1,100 square kilometre zone in 1985 when it withdrew the bulk of its forces after a three-year occupation of southern Lebanon. The zone is patrolled jointly by Israel and members of the Israeli-financed South Lebanon Army militia.

Egyptian food poisoning rises to 19

CAIRO (AP) — At least 19 people have died from food poisoning after eating salted fish in a spring feast this week, newspapers said Sunday. Hundreds of Egyptians suffered from food poisoning after eating the fish which apparently all came from one shop. Daily Al Ahram newspaper said that the shop's owner, Montassir Mohamad Ali, was released on a 3,000 pound (\$1,000) bail. Al Ahram said that the number of deaths from the poisoning had reached 19. Another daily, Al Gomhuria, said only 14 had died. Last Monday, millions of Egyptians celebrated the holiday called Sham Al Nessim, or "smell the breeze," a traditional feast that heralds the start of spring. The feast originated in antiquity, when Egypt was ruled by Pharaohs. Part of its tradition is eating salted fish, onions, eggs and lettuce.

Siad Barre's loyalists reportedly defeated

NAIROBI (AP) — Somalia's interim government says it has repelled an attack by loyalist forces of ex-President Mohammad Siad Barre in an area southwest of the capital of Mogadishu. In a broadcast Saturday night, Somali radio said the Barre loyalists had launched an attack in the Shabeellaha Hoose region, but had been repelled. The broadcast, monitored in Nairobi, did not report the specific location of the battle, when it occurred or give casualty figures for either side. The broadcast quoted Husayn Ali Shidow, chairman of the United Somali Congress, as saying the Siad Barre loyalists had been dealt a "devastating blow." The United Somali Congress drove Siad Barre out of Mogadishu in late January and set up an interim government. It was one of several rebel groups seeking the ex-president's ouster. The interim government has not been accepted by all other rebel groups and it has been engaged in scattered fighting with some of them and remnants of Mr. Siad Barre's army.

French nationals injured in Iran crash

Committee appeals for application of international legitimacy in Palestine

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Amman-based Palestinian Committee for the Problem of Immigration and Transfer has appealed to the European Community (EC) nations to help put an end to "hypocrisy and double standard" in dealing with the Palestinian human and political rights and invited the Europeans to use their good will and concerted efforts to end Soviet-Jewish immigration to the occupied Arab territories and refrain from financing that process.

"Immediate implementation of means and ways to protect Palestinians from Israeli collective punishment, cultural genocide and crimes against humanity is a first step towards the institutionalisation of respect of international conventions so as to ensure the Palestinian right to self-determination in their homeland," said the committee's chairperson Abdul Jawad Saleh in a message addressed to the EC summit meeting last week.

Mr. Saleh, former mayor of the West Bank town of Al Birsh and deported by the Israeli authorities, said that member states of the European summit who joined the "alliance" for implementing "international legitimacy" against Iraq, are not reacting as expected towards what is happening in the Palestinian occupied territories. The scarce resources of land and water are usurped by the Israelis to undermine any peaceful solution which will provide the Palestinians with graveyards albeit an independent state. The European member states, and the United States are financing the Soviet Jewish immigration, who are being absorbed and settled on expropriated Palestinian lands. Ignoring and defying "international legitimacy" which calls for dismantling of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories and the return of Palestinian deportees, not to mention the Palestinian refugees who live in squallid camps dispersed all over the Arab World, begin the scapegoat and victims of massacres.

Adoption of double standards in dealing with the different crises and regional disputes will not only undermine Western credibility, but will lead to the re-institutionalisation of a vanishing system of colonialism. The rule of the forest, of hegemony, will replace the rule of law, whether international or local.

Could the Palestinians be saved from despair? Could they expect concerted efforts from those who maintain the nobility of human rights principles towards implementing all United Nations resolutions pertaining to the Palestinian question as the only means to establish a just and comprehensive peace? Or, will the European summit advocate its efforts for dividing the spoils of the Gulf war, and declares a modern crusaders' war against the Arabs and Muslims. It seems there are no other options, besides a just peace, for all the parties concerned.

Since the Soviet authorities allowed Soviet Jews migration, under the pretext of human rights, the process of their absorption in Israel has been linked with the acceleration of building new settlement and fatiguing old ones in the occupied territories and refrain from financing that process in defiance of "international legitimacy." Moreover, immediate implementation of means and ways to protect Palestinians from Israeli collective punishment, cultural genocide and crimes standardised as against humanity is a first step towards institutionalisation of respect of international conventions so as to ensure Palestinian right to self-determination in their homeland.

Despite the fact that the Palestinians opted for a territorial compromise since 1974, when the 13th session of the Palestinian National Council (PNC), decided to establish a national authority on any areas evacuated by Israeli

forces, and again in 1988, when the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), unequivocally adopted a peace initiative which recognises the state of Israel. Yet Israel inexorably defies "international legitimacy" and ignores these historical changes.

The Palestinian intifada, using non-violence with minor exceptions, did not move the Western powers into action to accommodate Palestinian aspirations. Their tremendous sacrifices — in the "intifada's" first year alone, proportionally more Palestinians died (one person out of three to five thousand) than did U.S. soldiers in the decade-long military intervention in southeast Asia — did not constitute a catalyst among the Western powers to launch sanctions against Israel to convince the latter to establish peace in the area.

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Bridges timetable announced

AMMAN (Petra) — King Hussein and Prince Mohammad bridges on the River Jordan will be closed on Thursday, April 18, and will reopen on Friday morning, when they are receiving only 50 travellers each. The bridges will also admit 50 and 70 travellers over King Hussein and Prince Mohammad bridges respectively on Wednesday.

Victimised Jordanians handed over to embassy

From Serene Halasa in Iraq

EIGHT JORDANIANS, victims of acts of vengeance in Kuwait, where handed over to the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad Thursday. The victims long-time residents of Kuwait, were accused of collaborating with the Iraqis and were severely tortured for twelve hours at the hands of Kuwaiti mobs before they were taken to prison in Saudi Arabia.

Subhi M. Abdul Aziz, 29, was taken along with two other Jordanians while they were on their way to a local supermarket in Kuwait City. "We stopped at a Kuwaiti checkpoint, and when the soldiers saw that we were Jordanians, they hurried us out of the car," Abdul Aziz recalled. "Without being accused of anything, they started interrogating us," he added.

"We were stripped naked and thrown to the ground. Then they (Kuwaitis) started shooting around us to scare us," Abdul Aziz said.

The torture that followed was so brutal that the physical scars of eight victims will be a blantant reminder of the psychological scar that is sure to haunt them for

a long time to come.

"They whipped me with chains, broke my arm and nose, burnt me with cigarette butts and hot coal, punched me and cursed me," Abdul Aziz said.

Another victim, Basel Abdul Karim Saeed, 26, had gas poured on his body and hair. "They set it on fire, and immediately put the fire in my hair out," he recalled bitterly.

Saeed was severely beaten, his nose was broken and he lost the ability to hear with his right ear.

The youngest of the group, Tareq Ibrahim Ali Hussein, 13, was the most severely tortured. The boy recalled what had happened to him saying: "They stripped me naked and started beating me. Two would hold me while another two beat me. They kept taking turns doing that."

"The severity of Hussein's beatings rendered him blind for three days. Today Hussein cannot see properly with his left eye."

The three were then thrown into a bus to later join three other Jordanian prisoners.

"When they opened the back door of the bus there was blood

everywhere. I remember thinking whoever is in there is definitely dead," Bassam Mamdouh Abdul Hamid, another victim said.

Abdul Hamid, 23, along with two others: Raed Abdul Fattah, 24, and Abdul Fatah Omar, 21, also received merciless beatings and were tortured.

"They kept beating me with everything they could get their hands on, whips, chains even a hatchet," Abdul Fattah said.

"When they first rounded us up they stripped us naked in public and had women, whom we have never seen before, accuse us of sexually assaulting them," he bitterly recalled.

"They also told us to run as they started chasing us in their cars and sometimes they actually hit us," Abdul Hamid added.

"See this? This is a cigarette burn," Abdul Fattah said pointing to a scar on his right shoulder.

"See this? They pulled out my finger nail," he added showing his injured finger.

The last two to join the group were 19-year-old Ghassan Al Khatib, and 21-year-old Saad

Study under way for better investment of Postal Savings Fund

AMMAN (J.T.) — Director General of the Post and Postal Savings Corporation Abdullah Al Jazi has said that the Postal Savings Fund was currently embarking on a study aimed at finding the best means for investing the fund's money, noting that the fund is currently giving loans to the corporation's staff.

"Once the fund has sufficient money, it will expand the scope of loans to cover all the Post and Postal Savings corporation," said Mr. Jazi in an interview with the Arabic daily Al Ra'i, published Saturday.

He said that the number of people depositing savings in the fund was around 265,000. Mr. Jazi also said that the corporation would start, as of June 1, collecting payments of electricity bills in the rural and remote areas, through its network of post offices, thus adding a new service to the corporation's services which include already applications for admission to universities and applications for jobs sent to the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. Jazi pointed out that the corporation would establish four post offices in Nuza, Ra' Al Ain, Nafif and Marrikh, thus bringing to 842 the number of post and postal savings offices.

"This means that every 3,571 citizens are served by one post office or postal saving office," Mr. Jazi said.

On the delay and loss of some letters, Mr. Jazi said that the average time a letter takes to get to its address is four and a half days, including 2.08 days in Jordan and 2.42 days in the country



Abdullah Al Jazi

of destination.

He warned citizens against enclosing cheques or cash in their letters, saying that such a measure is in violation of the International Postal Union rules.

Such cheques or cash can be sent by postal notes, he commented.

Mr. Jazi said that the letter, since its delivery to any post office, passes through various stages, including collection, sorting, distribution and transport.

Mr. Jazi said that the number of post office boxes in Jordan totalled 110,000. He added that the corporation last year handled 100 million postal material, including 36 million inside Jordan and 64 million outside Jordan.

On the premium mail, Mr. Jazi said the corporation handled 77,000 postal material exchanges with 29 countries. In the field of electronic mail, Mr. Jazi said that the corporation had put 20 fax machines at the disposal of citizens, saying that any citizen can send any message inside and outside Jordan by fax.

Indian organisation plans to build hospital in Iraq

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A team representing the Indian charitable organisation AMURT is preparing to go to Iraq carrying further food supplies like sugar, milk, rice, cooking oil, and flour to the Iraqi people.

Ramanand Avadutha, the team's leader, said that during the team's stay in Baghdad, its members will discuss the prospect of setting up a \$22 million hospital and will ship various quantities of medicine, clothing and blankets, weighing 90 tonnes, to the Iraqi people.

AMURT, which stands for Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team, earlier distributed relief supplies in Jordan and Iraq in the wake of the Gulf war and during the Gulf crisis.

AMURT is described as an Indian organisation which bases its efforts on the ancient spiritual values of Hinduism.

Mr. Avadutha told the Jordan Times that his team aimed at alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people and helping in the

reconstruction of the country. In Jordan, Mr. Avadutha said, his team distributed 1,000 packages of food supplies to Jordanian families that returned penniless from Kuwait.

He said that his team would be bringing in further quantities of food supplies to the Jordanian expatriates and would distribute the supplies in cooperation with the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS).

According to Mr. Avadutha, AMURT plans to set up an orphanage, a hospital and a home for the elderly in Iraq, and hopes to set up a permanent office in Jordan to organise the distribution of aid in Jordan, which took the brunt of the Gulf crisis consequences, as well as in Iraq itself.

"Our motto is 'service to humanity is service to God,'" said Mr. Avadutha in an earlier interview with the Jordan Times.

He said that Jordan was not the only country in the region to receive aid from his organisation which has branches worldwide and is doing all it can to offer assistance to the needy.

UNDRO closes Amman office

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Disaster Relief Organisation (UNDRO) will close its offices in Amman as of Monday, April 15, according to a press release issued by Gerhard Mortier, acting United Nations emergency manager in Jordan. The press release noted that contacts on the implementation of the regional humanitarian plan of action related to the Gulf crisis can be channelled through the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative Ali Attia.

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AMMAN (J.T.) — A team representing the Arab American doctors in the United States is due here on April 28 in the course of a tour that will take the team members also to Iraq to study the general condition of people in the two countries in the wake of the Gulf war.

Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) Vice-President Mohammad Mitlaq Al Hadid, who made the announcement, said that the team would be led by Dr. Irfan Al Hamid who conveyed to him the fact that his group had donated \$100,000 to the Iraqi people to alleviate their suffering resulting from the American-led aggression, \$20,000 to the JNRCS to help finance its humanitarian activities, and \$10,000 to Lebanon.

The 12-member team, all doctors and specialists, will hold talks with the Iraqi and the Jordanian Red Crescent Societies officials, Mr. Hadid said.

He said that the team would purchase \$50,000 worth of medical supplies and the rest will be used to buy flour for the Iraqi people.

Dr. Hani told Mr. Hadid in a message that his group would examine the health condition of people in Baghdad, Karbala, Al

Hilleb, Al Basra, Kirkuk and Mosul.

The same group had earlier offered donations for the purchase of vaccines for children sent to Iraq through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Dr. Hadid said.

Dr. Hadid voiced appreciation to the Arab American doctors for their humanitarian gesture.

Also Sunday, a convoy of trucks laden with medicine and food supplies was sent to Iraq from Amman by the Arab Emergency Health Committee.

Dr. Ibrahim Abu Hamid, member of the committee, said that the trucks carried 180 tonnes of medicines, children milk and other food supplies for the Iraqi people. Dr. Abu Hamid also announced that the committee had received JD 8,000 in contributions collected by the trade unions in Aqaba to be used to send relief supplies to Iraq.

The committee chairman, Dr. Mousa Abu Hamid, left for Baghdad on a several day visit during which he will tour hospitals and give token gifts to the patients on behalf of the Arab Health Ministers Council.

Dr. Mousa Abu Hamid said he

Ministry admits faulty processing of scholarships, says it will revise them

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Higher Education Sunday admitted that an oversight in processing the huge number of applications for this year's scholarships was behind the outcry among the students who were deprived of a chance for scholarships to ensure their higher education.

He said that the ministry planned to follow stricter systems from now on in processing the applications.

Minister of Higher Education Saeed Al Tal said that the ministry had been in the habit of granting scholarships only to those who excelled in the tawjihi examination, but this year, and in view of the difficult economic conditions, the ministry decided to give part of this chance to students from needy families.

The Ministry of Education had in the previous years granted scholarships to some 1,800 students annually, in various specialisations, mostly at Jordanian universities, but the number became 1,260 and was cut to 1,000.

"We assumed that the students had submitted correct information because a clear statement in the application said that the students bear full responsibility for any incorrect information," Dr. Bashaireh said.

"We, in fact, followed a practice adopted by the Income Tax Department, which allows each person to voluntarily give information about his or her income for taxation purposes, but not all the 2,000 students abided by the rule and gave correct information, and the ministry will now have to revise the applications," Dr. Bashaireh said.

The ministry official was in fact

relying to an outcry raised by students in the local press accusing the ministry of granting the scholarships this year to those who were not in need or those who have influential relatives that secured the scholarships for them.

"I am not revealing a secret when I say that mistakes have been committed, but they constitute a limited margin," Dr. Bashaireh said. However, he added, although the student him-

self bears the responsibility for the information he supplies in the questionnaire, this does not solve the Ministry of Higher Education from its responsibility.

Dr. Bashaireh estimates that only 50 or 60 scholarships were given to those who are not entitled to them, but, he said, a thorough revision of the whole process would be conducted to put matters right.

According to Dr. Bashaireh, scholarships in the past went to those excelling in their performance at school, and the ministry used to grant the scholarships on the condition that students would later serve various government departments.

Now, he said, there is a surplus of most of the specialisations needed by the different government departments, there is less and less need for the Ministry of Higher Education to grant scholarships at a time when the number of those vying for them increases every year.

"The ministry used to grant students with scholarships a sum of JD 35 a month, which was later cut to JD 25 and this year it is JD 20 as pocket money, while the grants for books went down from JD30 per year to JD26," Dr. Bashaireh said.

He said that the Ministry of Higher Education had allocated JD 1 million to finance this year's scholarships to Jordanian universities, but scholarships from Arab and friendly countries are offered free, in accordance with agreements between Jordan and the other countries.

Referring to the ministry's plans to put matters right, he said, that it would take until the end of April to do that and things would be put in the right perspective after a revision of all the applications.

IOM outlines operations

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

Chairman of the Board of Directors: MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General: MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief: GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation, University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 661717/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Faximile: 661242

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Dialogue vs bullets

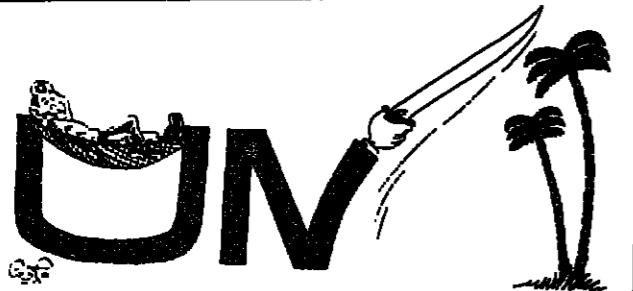
LEBANESE PRIME Minister Omar Karami's pledge that the Beirut government would not use force to disarm militias and Palestinian fighters in the country in its drive for peace comes as a reassuring note amid signs that the state of peace is being consolidated there. Having seen the government come this far in moving steadily to eliminate perennial symptoms of violence, it is gladdening to note that it has opted for the path of dialogue to resolve problems rather than pick up the gun at the first sign of trouble.

Of course, that is not to say that the problems of Lebanon are simple as that. The country's woes are a manifestation of the Palestinian problem and the overall Arab-Israeli conflict and are intertwined with foreign armed presence. There cannot be any "final" peace in the country as long as the foreign armed presence remains; it was only natural that the Lebanese government appealed for Syrian and Egyptian intervention with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to pressure Israel into withdrawing its forces from South Lebanon in implementation of U.N. Resolution 425. The Iranian Revolutionary Guards in the Bekaa Valley would have no reason (technically at least) to cite for their continued presence once the Israelis leave. The military presence in the country of Syrians and Palestinians is an inter-Arab affair, which could be sorted out once the Israelis and Iranians pack up and get out.

In the same vein, there is no need for the Palestinian people to maintain an armed presence in the south of the country if their root problem is solved.

Having said that, it is no easy process that confronts Lebanon, which has been indirectly paying the price for the lingering Palestinian question. But that does not mean that peace for Lebanon has to await a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The small, beautiful country with its industrious people need peace, calm and serenity to put the past behind them and rebuild their lives in a spirit of reconciliation.

Dialogue, instead of bullets, should be the way to achieve that objective.



ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Through the Masri-Baker meeting in Geneva, Jordan has renewed its call for the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 to ensure a lasting settlement for the Palestine problem, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday. Only through the exchange of peace for land and the restoration of Palestinian national rights can just peace be established, said the paper. In addition, Mr. Masri made it clear that only the international peace conference can serve as the best forum for implementing the council resolutions and achieve peace for all parties in the region, the paper noted. Reaffirming that Jordan can serve as no substitute for the PLO in any future negotiations, the paper said that Jordan is keen on preserving the rights of the Palestinian people who should participate in full in the peace-making process which must take place under U.N. auspices and with the participation of the major powers to guarantee the peace and security of the region. With his statement, Mr. Masri has thus reaffirmed Jordan's position which is in line with that of the majority of the Arab states, and has thus aborted Israel's drive to push the Arabs towards a regional rather than an international parley. The paper said that Jordan is keen on maintaining solidarity among Arab states, not only in internal Arab affairs, but also with regard to the main issue: the Arab-Israeli conflict. But it said close Arab contacts and consultations are now needed to give further impetus to the joint effort towards peace and to avoid capitulation to the common enemy.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily criticises Iran for its post war behaviour vis-a-vis its neighbour, Iraq, and says that the Iranian leaders adopted a hostile attitude towards Baghdad in the wake of the U.S.-led aggression that brought about devastation to Iraqi cities. Tareq Masa'weh says that during the aggression a great number of Iraqi war and civilian planes took refuge in Iran and everybody in Iraq, Jordan and other parts of the world believed that they were safe. Iran's president Rafsanjani announced then that these aircraft will be returned to Iraq as soon as the war is over, but the war has long been over and the planes have not returned, the writer notes. Furthermore, the Iranian leaders now say that only 23 planes took refuge in Iran, and they would be returned but did not give any date, the writer points out. Instead of returning the planes to Iraq, the Iranian leaders have sent trouble makers across the border in order to carry out the remaining part of the conspiracy concocted against Iraq earlier, the writer adds. He says that the aim of the trouble makers was to destroy whatever remained of Iraq's demographic and geographic infrastructure to transform the country into another Lebanon. The writer says such behaviour and such underhand dealings will cost the Iranians their credibility in their relations with their neighbouring countries.

Baker takes small step on long road to Mideast peace

By Alan Elsner
Reuter

WASHINGTON — In the history of Middle East peacemaking, progress has been measured in small, painful steps and interrupted by frequent reverses.

Seen in those terms, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's latest Middle East peace mission could be accounted a success. He took a small, painful step forward, but the road ahead remains long and hard.

Baker's success in talks with leaders of Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan was to focus everyone's attention on a concept — a Middle East peace conference of some kind that would transform the dynamics of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"Once you get everyone around the table in direct negotiations, the whole atmosphere and situation may change," said one U.S. official.

Baker himself sees such a meeting as "breaking taboos" that have always prevented Arabs from talking with Israelis and Israelis with Palestinians.

But even if Arabs and Israelis are now talking about talks, the talk each side has in mind are not necessarily the same.

Israel wants a regional conference that would exclude the United Nations and countries like Britain and France which it sees as intrinsically biased in favour of the other side.

It wants a meeting without preconditions and certainly not one based on the ideals of Security Council Resolution 242 and 338 which call for Israel to trade occupied land for a secure peace.



Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia are willing to consider a regional meeting as long as everyone agrees that the end result will be modelled on 242 and 338.

Syria wants a conference with a significant U.N. role based on the same resolutions. It is no longer calling for an

"international conference under U.N. auspices" and U.S. officials say its policy is in a state of some flux.

Baker's job now is to meld these differing conceptions into a compromise acceptable to all. A first step, as he indicated last week, would be to jettison the emotive rhetoric

that has already attached itself to the title of the conference.

"The adjective you put in front of the word 'conference,' it seems to me is not anywhere near as important as whether or not the parties truly want to sit down and meet and have direct negotiations for peace," he said.

Baker, who has a rare nose for a deal, will likely spend the next several days trying to craft a formula for a conference that all can live with, before returning to the Middle East to test it on the parties.

But then he will run into the next big obstacle — who represents the Palestinians?

LETTERS

A giant step backwards

To the Editor:

NOAM CHOMSKY'S article, "The weak shall inherit nothing," (the Jordan Times, April 3, 91) crystallizes many other authors' thoughts on the new cynicism permeating U.S. government policy. Politics in practice have always been exploitative and racist, but they have usually been disguised as necessary evils essential to the eventual benefit of everyone involved. Now, there is no attempt to hide the equation that brute force will conquer. No apologies are offered. Acceptance of force is the only viable alternative. However, if this is the new morality, publicly flaunted, what will happen to our court system, corporate responsibilities and international business ethics? We are headed for a state of anarchy, a time of lawlessness, and a negation of religious teachings and humanitarianism. Perhaps a line could be drawn separating government and individual actions. Corporations would have their own individual codes, depending upon how much they could contribute to government power. This new world order would be a giant step backwards for humanity.

(Mrs.) Judith Abu Jaber
P.O. Box 950392
Amman.

Shamir

(Continued from page 1)

States had "removed land mines" on the road to peace. Levy said. On settlement, Mr. Levy said: "No one promised to stop construction in (the West Bank) and Gaza. No Israeli government..."

"Our right cannot be challenged. There is one difference that doesn't upset the whole world," he said.

Pullout

(Continued from page 1)

forces would remain in the demilitarised zone until the U.N. observer unit takes over. A spokesman for the U.N. observer group, Joachim Hutter, said Sunday that he could not when that would be.

"In light of Iraqi acceptance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 687 and the commencement of the deployment of the U.N. observer unit to the demilitarised zone, coalition forces will begin withdrawing from their current positions in Iraq south of the Euphrates River and start moving south to the demilitarised zone established by the U.N. resolution," the committee said.

The central command said the United States will continue to fly combat air patrols to protect allied land forces along the demilitarised strip.

Nearly 30,000 Iraqi refugees remain in the Safwan area, five kilometres inside Iraq near the Kuwait border, and at another camp in the town of Rafa, which is outside the demilitarised zone.

A 500-man French helicopter squadron, based near the town of Salman, is believed to be the only non-American unit of the Gulf war allies in the area. There was no word on when they would withdraw.

The commander of the U.N. force due to patrol the demilitarised zone, Austrian Lieutenant-General Gunther Greindl, arrived in Kuwait Saturday. He held talks on Sunday with the emir.

Saddam

(Continued from page 1)

Iraq to make a new start.

"Our country has to become prosperous once again, confident in itself, confident in the loyalty of its men and women and all that has happened will become stories of the past."

The Baghdad newspapers pictured the president praying at a mosque and talking to officials at Erbil, the administrative capital of Iraqi Kurdistan. They also showed him in front of a crowd at Mosul, Iraq's third largest city.

Visits by foreign journalists to Erbil and to Sulaimaniya, the cradle of Kurdish nationalism further to the east near the border with Iran, suggested that refugees had started to filter back home in the past few days.

But there was no sign of a mass return from the mountains and the borders with Iran and Turkey.

Local officials told journalists in Erbil on Saturday that up to 50,000 people had returned. They said in Sulaimaniya on Thursday that up to 25,000 had come back.

Kurds form about 20 per cent of Iraq's 18 million people.

Another report said officials of the Kurdish autonomous region had declared that 40,000 to 50,000 families had returned since the government's amnesty announcement early this month.

The government, trying to win back the confidence of the people,

extended the amnesty on Thursday for one week for people still inside the country and two weeks for those outside.

The amnesty, for everyone who took part in the rebellion except for "acts of murder, rape or theft which took place under the conditions of the incidents of rioting and treachery," originally was to expire last Friday.

Iraqi Kurdish rebels charged Sunday that government forces were still attacking rebel-held areas and refugees in northern Iraq and appealed for United Nations protection for civilians.

A Shi'ite opposition group reported continued hit-and-run attacks by insurgents in southern Iraq. Both reports could not be independently confirmed.

The Iraqi News Agency said Sunday the governor of the southern province of Basra had met a delegation from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The rebellion in the south began in the port of the same name, which was heavily bombed in the Gulf war.

The agency said Latif Hammud told the delegation about the effects of the "U.S.-Atlantic aggression" and of looting and sabotage.

Mr. Hammud said electricity had been restored in most areas and pure water networks were working at full capacity.

The agency said the Red Cross team was part of a mission to provide medical aid and install water treatment equipment.

The Iranian government extended the amnesty on Sunday to ease the desperate plight of Iraqi refugees.

"(The refugees) have left their hearths and homes, their homeland, and have come to partake of our hospitality and selflessness," Tehran Radio said.

"Words cannot express the depth of this disaster. Please help the Iraqi refugees."

The United Nations' top refugee coordinator arrived in the Iranian capital and said 50 tonnes of badly-needed food supplies had been sent to Iran.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata, said more aid was being flown to Iran, which says the world has ignored its refugee problem and concentrated on a similar exodus to Turkey, a U.S. Gulf war ally.

The European Community said Saturday it was donating enough bread, lentils and vegetable oil to feed 600,000 of Iraq's Kurdish refugees on mountains along the Iranian and Turkish borders for two months.

Marc Pierini, the official coordinating the EC's relief effort, told journalists the community would also provide medical help, 10,500 family-sized tents and 237,500 blankets.

Ms. Ogata arrived in Iran Saturday.

The U.N. official said, if allowed, she would visit Baghdad.

The Supreme National Defence Council, Iran's highest de-

fence body, called Saturday for a major world effort, in concert with the Iraqi government, to get the refugees home.

"The Iranian government

was polled during the last two weeks in March, and results had a margin of error of plus or minus three per cent, analysts said.

There are more than 3.7 million Jews in Israel. The survey did not question any of the country's 840,000 Israeli-Arabs.

The split in the Jewish public over how to proceed towards peace could be seen in answers to a question on how they would solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Thirty-six per cent of the respondents favoured some form of "annexation," while 35 per cent called for returning all or part of the occupied territories as part of a peace agreement. Twelve per cent favoured the status quo, and 17 per cent called for limited autonomy, as the government has proposed.

In contrast, 64 per cent were not willing to return any of the Golan Heights.

A total of 91 per cent surveyed this year supported the development of nuclear weapons, up from 78 per cent in 1987. Readiness to use such weapons was up to 88 per cent this year, compared with 53 per cent five years earlier.

The government cannot be divided into those who are 'protecting the interests of the people' and those who are 'abandoning the people and the country'.

Mr. Levy added.

In agreeing to a regional conference, Israel and the United

An uneasy truce in DFLP awaiting the verdict at PCC

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A de facto truce appeared to have taken effect between the two feuding factions in one of the largest and most influential Palestinian groups, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), pending the convening of the Palestine Central Council (PCC), which will meet in Tunis on April 21.

The halt in the war of words between DFLP leader Nayef Hawatmeh and his erstwhile close aide Yasser Abed Rabbo offers a respite to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which itself is facing an uphill struggle against American-Israeli attempts to marginalise its role in the Middle East peace process.

The split in the DFLP, the third largest faction in the PLO after Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), is seen by many observers as rooted in political differences but turned more personal between Damascus-based Hawatmeh and Tunis-based Abed Rabbo, who is also a member of the PLO Executive Committee.

The simmering conflict emerged to the surface and was fought in the open since last month when Mr. Hawatmeh, founder and secretary-general of the Marxist-oriented group, sent an official request on behalf of the DFLP Central Committee addressed to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat designating Tayseer Khaled as observer in the PLO Executive Committee regardless of Mr. Abed Rabbo's membership in the 15-man panel.

The speaker of the Palestine National Council (PNC), the policymaking body of the Palestinian movement, has accepted the DFLP nomination, but rejected a bid by Mr. Hawatmeh to replace Mr. Abed Rabbo in the Executive Committee saying that any appointment or replacement of PLO executives will have to be made by the PNC as and when it meets next, sources close to the PLO said.

The Palestine Central Committee, which liaises between the PNC and the Executive Committee, will discuss the DFLP feud and decide whether to call a PNC meeting, according to the sources.

"Whether or not the rivals will formalise their split into Hawatmeh and Abed Rabbo camps depends on the decision of the Central Committee," said one of the sources. "The committee has to decide whether to accept Mr. Hawatmeh's request, which implies a convocation of the PNC, or reject it saying the PNC will meet as and when the normal course of events warrants," the source said.

Political observers said Mr. Hawatmeh, whose supporters control most key positions within the DFLP hierarchy—including finances—appeared to be in a better position to retain the leadership of the hardcore members of the faction if Mr. Abed Rabbo decides to form his own group.

Both camps are maintaining that they have the support of a majority in the 61-member Central Committee of the DFLP, and both use the official stationary and stamps of the committee in their communiques. Abed Rabbo supporters claim that they have the support of nine of the 11 Central Committee members from the occupied West Bank and Gaza—"the Palestinian constituency that matters"—as one Abed Rabbo supporters put it.

The DFLP leads all other factions in terms of support from Palestinian women's movements. Ms. Zahira Kamal, the senior-most Palestinian woman activist in the occupied territories, is reported to be an ardent supporter of Mr. Abed Rabbo, but Hawatmeh supporters argue that such support stems from Mr. Abed Rabbo's status as a PLO executive who can influence top-level decisions.

The Hawatmeh-Abed Rabbo split has been marked by accusations and counter-accusations, stripping of each other of DFLP positions and expulsion of each other from the group.

The feud dates back to August 1988, when the rivals clashed over strategy towards the Palestinian uprising which had begun eight months ago in the occupied territories. However, they decided to bury the differences when various PLO factions, buoyed by riding the wave of the intifada,



Nayef Hawatmeh



Yasser Abed Rabbo

got together, convened the PNC and mapped out a new strategy, which was transformed into a peace initiative based on a two-state solution.

All PLO factions, except those dissident wings openly supported by Syria, accepted the initiative. (Although the DFLP and the PFLP are based in Syria, analysts say that it would not be fair to categorise them as open supporters of the Syrian line of thinking.)

In fact, the DFLP and PFLP were reserving the right to voice their objections to the course that the PLO leadership might adopt when they assumed seats in the Executive Committee, according to PLO Executive Committee regardless of Mr. Abed Rabbo's membership in the 15-man panel.

A senior PLO official stepped into the fray this week with a castigating attack on both sides of the DFLP.

"Obviously this puts Mr. Abed Rabbo in a difficult situation within the Executive Committee, particularly when the DFLP component in the intifada leadership opposes decisions relayed to it by the mainstream PLO leadership," the source pointed out.

At the same time, when Mr. Abed Rabbo seeks to convince the mainstream DFLP leadership of the soundness of the Executive Committee's decisions, he exposes himself to be labelled as being "too close to Fatah," which is led by Mr. Arafat.

"It is a combination of all these factors that accumulated since mid-1988 that led to the split," according to the source.

Informed Palestinian sources also argued that Mr. Hawatmeh felt that Mr. Abed Rabbo, who is in charge of the information department of the PLO, has gone "too close" to the thinking of Mr. Arafat, whose so-called moderate approach to Middle East peace efforts is not fully endorsed by the DFLP founder, particularly after 18 months of an American-PLO dialogue got the PLO almost nowhere in its quest for an independent Palestinian state following Mr. Arafat's renunciation of terrorism and acceptance of the state of Israel in December 1988.

Mr. Abed Rabbo headed the PLO side in the dialogue, which was confined on the American side to the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia. According to DFLP sources, one of the key reasons behind the split involves the status of the Jordan Democratic Party, which was set up by DFLP supporters. "While Mr. Abed Rabbo argues that the Jordan Democratic Party should be a totally independent Jordanian political organ-

isation, he is not allowed to speak their own language (a law was passed in the Turkish parliament on Friday easing that restriction); if they did, they would be prosecuted," was

Kurds are hungry but so are the rest of the Iraqis

Selective world sympathy — another level of double standards



A Kurdish fighter

The writer, Sami Atiyeh, has just returned from a three-week visit to Iraq.

THE KURDISH rebellion in the north of Iraq and the international attention the Kurds have received as a result has somewhat shocked the Iraqi people and they see this attention as being unfair to the rest of the Iraqi population.

Both officials and ordinary people in Baghdad have described what they saw as "the sudden interest in the welfare" of the Iraqi Kurds as being "unjust and another page of the conspiracy against Iraq."

"Since when is the world, particularly Iran and Turkey, so concerned about the welfare and security of the Kurds of Iraq?" was a common question being asked among the people in Baghdad.

The Iraqis who spoke to the Jordan Times on the Kurdish question generally emphasised that the two million Iraqi Kurds enjoyed more rights than the estimated 12 million Kurds in Turkey and the 10 million in Iran.

"In Turkey, the Kurds are not even allowed to speak their own language (a law was passed in the Turkish parliament on Friday easing that restriction); if they did, they would be prosecuted," was

Mr. Sourji, a Kurd whose

position is equivalent to that of a secretary-general of a government ministry, told the Jordan Times that the Iraqi leadership's attention given to Kurdistan "had reached a point where the area is almost more developed and distinguished than the rest of Iraq."

Mr. Sourji is one of eight other committee members, who in the local government hierarchy, comes after the executive committee members whose positions are equivalent to that of government ministers.

Iraqi Kurdistan also has a legislative branch consisting of fifty members that acts as a local parliament.

"Autonomous Kurdistan has a separate budget for all types of services, education and so on, and the municipalities execute the legislative decisions," explained the Kurdish official.

The Kurdish opposition argues that the local self-rule government of the Kurdish north collaborates with the central government in Baghdad, but this is not denied or refuted by the Kurdish officials.

Schools in the northern provinces study all subjects in the Kurdish language, the Kurdish official stated, adding "do you find this in Iran or Turkey where the Kurdish population is much higher than in Iraq?"

The Kurdish language is also required for students in the last two years of high school in the rest of Iraq.

In the central government in Baghdad, the vice-president Taha Muhiddin Ma'ruf, is a Kurd; the Iraqi constitution states that the vice-president must be a Kurd. There are also 32 Kurdish members of the national assembly.

Mr. Sourji did not want to comment on the Kurdish rebellion in the north except to say that "the majority of the Kurds in Iraq are against it."

Kurdish opposition groups had been demanding an independent state in Iraqi Kurdistan. In the previous years, Kurdish rebellions have erupted, but were continuously quelled by the Iraqi government forces.

The latest Kurdish rebellion succeeded for a couple of weeks last month when the rebels occupied several cities and towns in the north of Iraq soon after the Gulf war hostilities ended. The government troops at the time were concentrating on quelling the Shi'ite rebellion in the southern provinces of the country.

Both Iraqi and international attention has been focused on the north more than the south, although the situation in the southern provinces had been much harsher than in the north.

Traces of fierce battles between the Shi'ite rebels and the government forces in the southern provinces of Karbala, Najaf, Basra and other cities were much more evident than in the Kurdish north. And

although services and food had been very scarce in the south, the Iraqi government had made a point of transporting food to the Kurds in the north after being cut off from Baghdad for two weeks when the rebels had controlled the major cities.

Kurdish residents in Erbil told the Jordan Times last week that most of those who fled the city and the surrounding villages had done so because food was not coming in from the government, which distributes basic food commodities at low subsidised prices.

"So the world is suddenly concerned with the north for so-called humanitarian purposes when the situation is much worse in the south," a senior Iraqi official told the Jordan Times.

"The Western governments are now talking about a security enclave for the Iraqi Kurds, and forgot about the Shi'ite fundamentalists in the south because they know it would not serve their interests," he added. "If they were so concerned about providing food for any Iraqi, they would know that the Iraqis in the south need it more. But they obviously don't care, and this whole show about the Kurds is just part of the scheme to divide Iraq."

Iraqis in Baghdad express resentment of sectarianism, to a point where they would be offended if they were asked if they were a Kurd. "They were a Kurd, and rarely would one get an answer. So when special attention and care is given to certain sects."

As Mohammad put it, "For God's sake, we are all Iraqis and in the same boat living under economic sanctions. I don't see why the government and the international community should give more privileges to the Kurds than to the rest of the Iraqi people."

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Last British combat troops leave Gulf

LONDON (R) — Britain completed the withdrawal of its fighting forces from the Gulf Saturday when the last 340 soldiers flew out of Saudi Arabia bound for bases in Germany, the ministry of defence said. In a formal send-off, Prince Khalid Ben Sultan, Saudi Arabia's armed forces chief of staff, said: "The forces of Great Britain fought with great skill, honour and courage on the ground and in the air." At the height of the Gulf war, there were more than 40,000 British servicemen and women in the area — the second largest Western contingent in the U.S.-led allied coalition. Several thousand British troops will remain in Saudi Arabia for about six months to complete the task of removing more than 11,000 vehicles, 50,000 tonnes of ammunition and other equipment. British warships remain on patrol in the Gulf.

Bomb blasts at Turkish airline offices

ISTANBUL (AP) — Bombs exploded on Saturday at two private Turkish airline offices here, causing damage but no injuries, police said. An underground leftist organisation, Dev Sol, claimed responsibility for the attacks, in phone calls to newspapers. The group said the attacks were staged to protest flights by private airlines while the national carrier was on strike. A police official said that gunmen raided the downtown offices of the two private airline companies at about 8:30 p.m. (0530 GMT) and placed the explosives before escaping. The explosions occurred immediately afterwards at Istanbul Airlines and the Pacific Airlines Tourism Company.

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Arsenal knocked out of F.A. Cup

LONDON (R) — A supremely confident Tottenham ended Arsenal's dreams of an unprecedented league and cup double Sunday with a 3-1 victory in the semifinals of the F.A. Cup.

League leaders Arsenal had been bidding to become the first side to score two league and F.A. Cup doubles, but could never match the flair of their great north London rivals.

Midfielder Paul Gascoigne hit the first Spurs goal, a beautiful curving free kick, after only five minutes and went on to set up the second for England team-mate Gary Lineker five minutes later.

In the first semifinal ever played at Wembley stadium — no neutral London stadium was big enough to cope with the number of fans — Spurs commanded every part of the field.

But Arsenal, the most consistent team in the country, never gave up the fight. A powerful 44-minute header from striker Alan Smith brought Arsenal back into the game just before half-time.

After the break, Arsenal again piled on the pressure, pushing the ball up front to forwards Kevin Campbell and Paul Merson.

But Spurs' Norwegian goalkeeper Erik Thorvedt played a brilliant game and Lineker put the result beyond doubt with his second goal of the match in the 76th minute.

It was a sad day for Arsenal manager George Graham, who could have been the first man to both play in and manage a double-winning side in separate seasons.

Judging by the vigour of Arsenal's second-half performance, Graham gave his team a powerful talking-to in the dressing room at half-time.

But, as he admitted himself, the damage was already done. "I think we're beaten," he said. "Spurs midfielder Gascoigne was making only his second appearance since

a double hernia operation a month ago, but soon showed the skills that have won him a \$15-million transfer offer from Italy's Lazio.

After scoring the first goal through his speciality free kick, Gascoigne made a delicate flick to winger Paul Allen to set up number two. Allen's cross into the centre bounced off Smith, before being stabbed home by Lineker.

Gascoigne has not fully recovered from the operation, and was visibly upset to be substituted for Nayim after an hour.

Spurs will have the chance of a record ninth F.A. Cup victory in the final on May 18, when they will meet either West Ham or Nottingham Forest.

Spurs keeper Thorvedt, who promised a "Viking invasion" of fans for the Wembley tie, was jubilant.

"It was the best day of my life," he said. "When they didn't score early in the second half, I was sure we were going to make it."

"The desire to win was exceptional throughout the side," added Lineker. "We defended very well."

Lineker will have been especially pleased with his second goal. Picking the ball up outside the area, he swerved round Arsenal captain Tony Adams before blasting a right-foot shot past Arsenal and England keeper David Seaman.

It was a shot that Seaman, who has let in a mere 14 goals in 33 league matches this season, would normally have saved.

While their more glamorous rivals were worrying about places in European competition next season or warming up for the F.A. Cup semifinals, lowly Sheffield United had their own quiet celebration Saturday.

A 2-1 win over Queen's Park Rangers virtually guaranteed that the once-despairing club will stay in the English first division next

year.

"I feel we are there," said relieved manager Dave Bassett, whose side began first division life this season without a win in their opening 16 games.

Mathematically, the slightest danger remains. Bottom-placed Derby are too far back to catch Sheffield but Sunderland, the other team facing relegation at present, are 12 points behind with four games — and a maximum of 12 points — to come.

But Bassett, who brought United back to the top division after a 14-year absence, is confident.

"We have got to lose our last four (games) and Sunderland have got to win their last four to overtake us," he said. "I think this should be enough."

"We are capable of picking up another point or two over these next four games."

United's win came in difficult circumstances. Away to a side that had not lost in 11 matches, their chances looked slim when striker Carl Bradshaw was carried off in the 13th minute with a twisted knee.

But five minutes later, Brian Deane scored from a John Gunnar free-kick to put United on Saturday.

Rangers equalised through Bradley Allen just before the interval but then United's Bob Booker headed home a John Pemberton cross to make sure the Sheffield side collected three much-needed points.

The winning goal was a personal delight for the 33-year-old Booker, a free-transfer signing from Brentford two years ago who spent the first decade of his career in the lower divisions.

But while the Sheffield camp breathed a sigh of relief, the mood at Derby was sombre after another loss, 3-0 away to Coventry.

It was Derby's 19th defeat of the season and, with only 21 points accumulated from 32

matches, almost nothing can stop them going down to the second division next season.

"It's not very nice losing all the time," said Derby goalkeeper Peter Shilton, who bowed out of the England side after last year's World Cup finals.

"We're not bottom of the league for nothing and things are looking bad for us."

Sunderland were level 1-1 with Southampton at half-time but a contested penalty from Matthew Le Tissier — which resulted in Sunderland's Gordon Armstrong being sent off for arguing — and an 85th-minute goal by striker Alan Shearer gave Southampton a 2-1 win.

Among the teams eager to replace the first division drop-outs next season, West Ham had on to the second division lead without kicking a ball Saturday.

West Ham kept their one-point lead when nearest rivals Oldham were beaten 3-2 at Newcastle.

John Barnes and Liverpool stamped on rumours of the English soccer champions' demise with a stunning performance in a 5-4 league win over Leeds United on Saturday.

England winger Barnes scored twice and helped with another as Liverpool rediscovered the winning touch in an action-packed match.

With first division leaders Arsenal out of league action Liverpool picked up three vital points to reduce the gap at the top to five points.

But Liverpool, 10 times league champions in the last 15 years, were lucky in the end to get a win at Leeds' Elland Road ground.

The top-seeded Graf, the defending champion here, played exceptionally well to whip unseeded American Patty Fendick 6-0 6-1 in a 56-minute drubbing.

Reaching the final guarantees the second-seeded Sabatini the number-three ranking which Martina Navratilova has been occupying. This is the first time since 1977 that Navratilova had fallen out of the top three.

"Is that true?" asked Sabatini, when told she will move up a notch in Monday's rankings. "That's very good and I'm happy about it. It's good to go up step-by-step."

Sabatini raced to a 4-0 lead in the first set before the fifth-ranked Sanchez Vicario broke serve. The Spaniard had another break in the seventh game, but it was too little, too late.

In the second set, Sanchez Vicario had Sabatini in trouble. The first two games stayed on serve, but Sanchez Vicario had the only other service winning game — the final game.

Sabatini seemed down for the count when Sanchez Vicario led 4-3 with a break in the third set. But Sabatini is the hottest player on tour and knows how to survive. She broke back in the eighth game and again on her third match point in the 10th game with a crafty forehand lob.

The 72nd-ranked Fendick was out of her realm with Graf. She hadn't played a claycourt tournament in eight years and was a surprise semifinalist. The dream ended quickly. Fendick held serve only once — in the first game of the second set.

Edberg wins Japan Open

TOKYO (R) — World number one Stefan Edberg won the Japan Open Tennis Tournament for the third successive year with a comfortable 6-1 7-5 6-0 victory over Ivan Lendl in the final Sunday.

"It is probably one of the best matches I ever played," the 25-year-old Swede said.

Edberg's second title of the season, and the 29th of his career, earned him a cheque for \$137,500. Lendl received \$72,380 as runner-up.

Edberg attributed his success to the extra practice he has put in here for his doubles matches with Australian Todd Woodbridge, with whom he was playing the final.

"I think that has had a lot of good effect, especially for my serve and volley which has been a problem this year," he said.

In the single final at the Ariake Colosseum, Edberg served well and dominated the first set, winning it easily in 37 minutes while the second-seeded Lendl committed a series of unforced errors on his ground.

The winning due earned \$55,000 and the runners-up \$28,910.

Sabatini, Graf advance to Florida tennis finals

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida (R)

— Gabriela Sabatini came dangerously close to missing an opportunity to become the number-three player in the world and to beat Steffi Graf again, but pulled out a 6-2 2-6 6-4 semifinal victory over Arantxa Sanchez Vicario at the \$350,000 Bausch and Lomb Women's Tennis Championships.

The top-seeded Graf, the defending champion here, played exceptionally well to whip unseeded American Patty Fendick 6-0 6-1 in a 56-minute drubbing.

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Eastern stays on top

BONN (R) — A last-minute goal by Markus Schupp gave Kaiserslautern coach Karlheinz Feldkamp said.

Roland Wohlfahrt, the Bundesliga's most prolific marksman, put Bayern ahead against Werder in the 15th minute with his 18th goal of the season.

Despite scoring for France against Spain and Albania and for Marseille in the European Cup against AC Milan and Spartak Moscow, Papin had been out of luck in the league.

But all that changed with a three-goal haul at the Stade Velodrome which hoisted the tally of the league's leading marksman to 22 helped and maintained Marseille's three-point lead at the top of the table.

Papin, France's top scorer for the past three years, netted with a fine header in the third minute and a brilliant shot in the 21st, both from crosses by England's Chris Waddle, and completed his hat-trick with a solo raid minutes from the interval.

With nine matches to go, Kaiserslautern lead with 35 points from 25 games.

"The top teams are really close, nothing is decided," Werder team chief Otto Rehhagel said.

Eintracht Frankfurt have sacked coach Joerg Berger and replaced him with ex-player Drausov Stepanovic.

Eintracht Vice-President Bernd Hoelzenbein said Sunday that the club had been considering terminating Berger's contract.

Bruno Labbadia reduced the deficit in the 63rd minute and Schupp equalised seconds before the final whistle with a superb long-distance shot.

"I had written the game off when we were 0-2 down, but the team showed all their virtues

Marseille crush Nancy

PARIS (R) — Jean-Pierre Papin notched a hat-trick — his first league goals in two months — to inspire French first division soccer leaders Marseille to a 6-2 win over struggling Nancy on Saturday.

David Zitelli and Segundo Simon salvaged some pride for last-but-one club Nancy on counter-attacks in the 63rd and 83rd minutes.

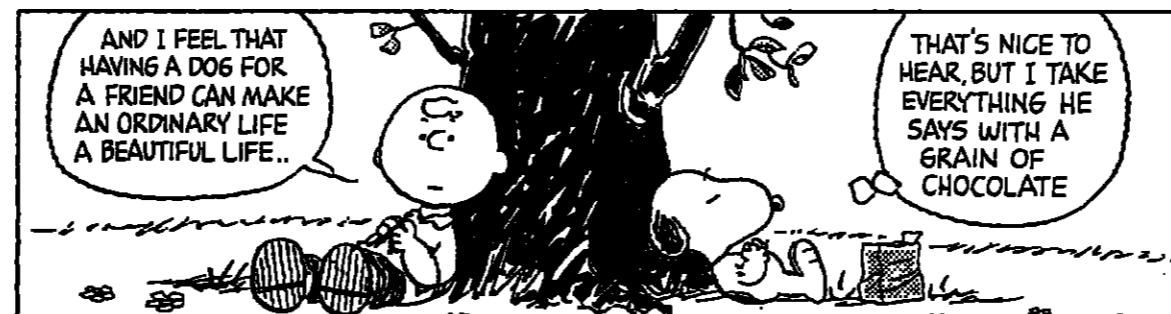
There was more good news for Marseille's Belgian coach Raymond Goethals as Yugoslav World Cup midfielder Dragan Stojkovic, out of action for months with a knee injury, played as a substitute after the interval.

Marseille, who have a gain in hand over the other leading clubs, remained three points clear of second-placed Monaco, who recorded a 2-0 home win over St Etienne with goals from Liberia's George Weah and Argentina's Ramon Diaz.

Marseille, with 47 points from 22 matches and six games to go, look set to win the title for the third consecutive season.

Auxerre, beaten 1-0 at Lille Friday, are third, six points behind the leaders.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt 'n' Jeff



JORDAN TIMES, MONDAY, APRIL 15-16, 1991

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY APRIL 15, 1991

Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ber 21) This is the time for you to listen to some expert and very exacting friend who has your interest at heart and who wants you to know he is doing his best.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Now you are able to understand better what those who are highly placed expect of you and despite your reluctance carry through with their request.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Even if it is not the right time to put that new plan in motion nevertheless you are able to study all phases of it and prepare to act.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Whatever you would like to do requiring the good will of one or more of your choice ideas you have for making money but the only trouble is they do not apply to today's activities.

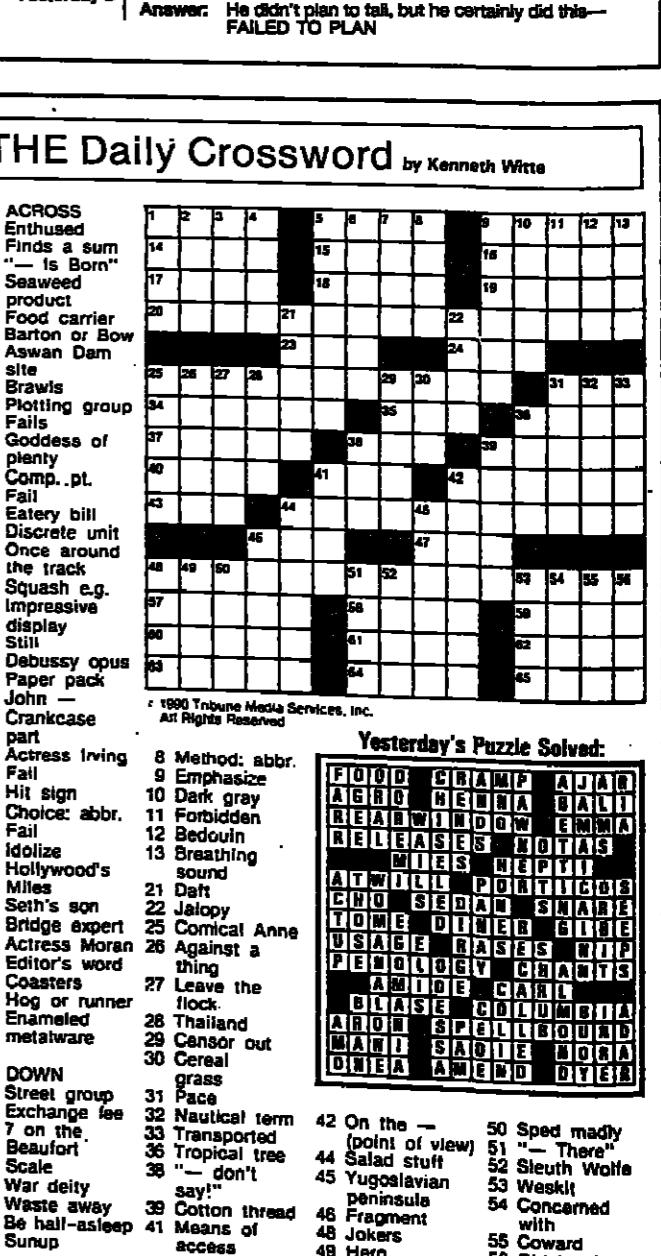
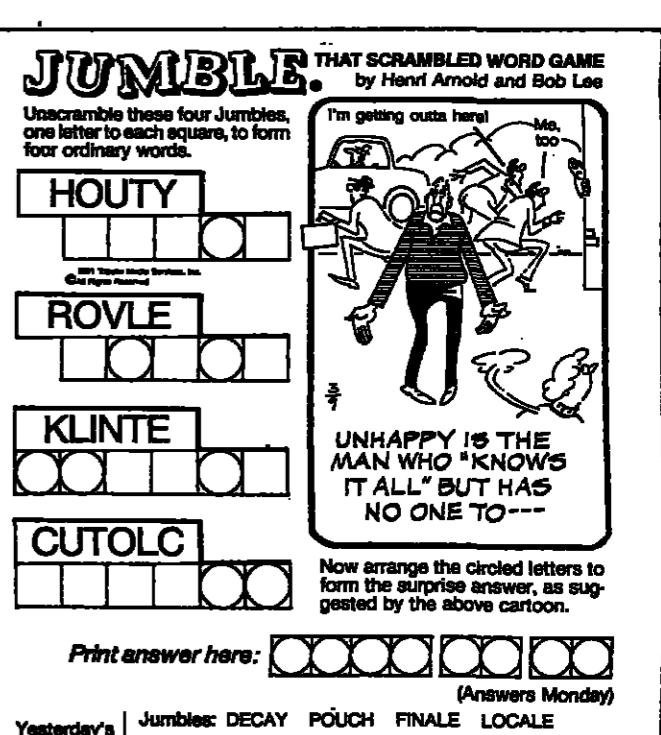
PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You can talk and talk now with allies and get nowhere fast excepting some opposition even though it may be overtly expressed.

Today's child: If your child were born today she or he has a special awareness of modern ideas and modern ways of getting ahead in this fast moving century. Bestowing upon this child usual educational opportunities will paid big dividends and gain for your progeny a certain awareness of all sorts of modern, up to date methods and activities.

"The stars impel, they do not compel, what you make of your life is largely up to you."

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Whatever those about expect of you in helpfulness should be followed despite an urge on your part to really go off on your own without considering allies.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21)



New Treuhand chief faces one of toughest tasks in Germany

BERLIN (R) — Germany has handed a woman politician one of the toughest jobs in the newly-united nation — to reshape the once communist east and help graft it successfully to the capitalist west.

Red-haired Birgit Breuel is new head of Germany's Treuhand privatisation agency, the world's largest holding company.

The agency's supervisory board Saturday chose the 53-year-old politician, a workaholic with limited business experience, from Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats, to succeed murdered Treuhand president Detlev Rohwedder.

"Few organisations in Germany have come under such wide public attack in recent years," said a Treuhand report on its controversial first nine months of work selling off, bailing out and winding down communist enterprises.

It said the Treuhand raised nearly 5.8 billion marks (\$3.5 billion), privatising one in eight state-owned firms, including all department stores and 70 per cent of restaurants and shops.

But only 1,000 of the 9,000 firms, which employ four million people at 40,000 sites, were fit enough to run without loans backed by Bonn, it said.

Nearly 350 firms face liquidation. Several are already being wound up with thousands of jobs being lost. Half the eight million work force could be jobless by

later this year.

Sunday's Berliner Morgenpost newspaper said former East Germany was wallowing in its worst-ever economic mire and that Breuel, previously a Treuhand board member, was courageously taking on a difficult job.

She will need the broad support of the government, opposition and the trade unions, the newspaper said.

"Politicians must above all stop treating the Treuhand as the scapegoat for conditions in the east," it said. "It was Bonn politicians who criminally underestimated the task."

Exasperated union-backed east German workers, confused and angry that the unification they wanted has turned sour, have taken to the streets in recent weeks to blame the Treuhand for dumping firms too quickly without thinking about unemployment.

Politicians in prosperous west Germany have accused the agency of dragging its feet over privatisation.

Breuel is likely to set a fast pace at the agency. A hard-working regional politician with a reputation as a free marketer, she has been favourably compared to former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

But her lack of hands-on experience in industry prompted the Treuhand supervisory board to appoint an unnamed industrialist as Breuel's deputy.

France's Michelin said planning up to 16,000 job cuts internationally

PARIS (R) — Curbbacks by France's troubled Michelin tyremaker will result in 16,000 job losses and cost the government 1.4 billion francs (\$245 million), Budget Minister Michel Charasse said.

"Michelin's plan to straighten out [its finances] implies 15,000 to 16,000 layoffs throughout the world," Charasse told the regional television station FR3-Auvergne Saturday.

Cie Des Etablissements Michelin, which is expected to report a net loss this week for 1990 of about five billion francs (\$877 million), said last week that it was planning to cut 4,900 jobs in France and nearly 4,000 elsewhere in the world.

Last June, Michelin said it would axe 2,300 jobs at its main plant and headquarters in central France and last week it said it planned to cut its worldwide

workforce of over 130,000 by 15 per cent. Industry sources said it would mean 12,000 job losses.

Michelin officials were unavailable for comment.

Charasse said Michelin's job cuts would cost the central government 1.4 billion francs in early retirement spending, adding to the central government's budget deficit which Paris has struggled to keep under control.

Michelin's anticipated 1990 loss is expected to include about three billion francs (\$525 million) for restructuring. The tyremaker reported net profit of 2.65 billion francs (\$465 million) in 1989.

Michelin incurred debts when it bought the U.S. firm Uniroyal Goodrich Tire Co. last May. Analysts put Michelin's debts at some 30 billion francs (\$5.26 billion) for 1990, almost double shareholders' funds of 17 billion francs (\$2.98 million).

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

| Sunday, April 14, 1991 | | Central Bank official rates | | | |
|------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------|-------|
| Buy | Sell | Buy | Sell | | |
| U.S. dollar | 676.0 | 680.0 | Japan yen (for 100) | 406.9 | 409.9 |
| Pound Sterling | 1202.4 | 1209.4 | Dutch guilder | 356.6 | 358.7 |
| Deutschmark | 401.7 | 401.1 | Swedish crown | 111.9 | 112.6 |
| Swiss franc | 474.2 | 477.0 | Italian lira (for 100) | 54.2 | 54.5 |
| French franc | 119.0 | 119.7 | Belgian franc (for 10) | 195.6 | 196.8 |

Iraqi refinery resumes partial production today

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's second largest oil refinery, crippled by U.S. and allied bombing during the Gulf war, will start production of some oil products Monday, the newspaper of the ruling Baath Party said.

The Al Thawra daily quoted the refinery's director-general, Kamal Ja'far, as saying that from May 1 the Dora refinery on Baghdad's southern outskirts would produce 76,000 barrels a day of oil products such as kerosene, diesel and lubricants.

Virtually all oil products have been rationed in Iraq since the Gulf war erupted earlier this year.

"The refinery will resume its pre-war production capacity as of June 1 when we touch 92,000 barrels per day," he added in an interview published Sunday.

He said damage to the refinery's processing units ranged from 10 to 100 per cent and that 80 per cent of the pipelines within the complex had been destroyed.

Twenty-four of the refinery's 200 storage tanks had been de-

troyed and 16 were partially damaged, he added.

The country's largest refinery at Baiji, 200 kilometres northwest of Baghdad on the road to Iraq's third largest city of Mosul, was also crippled by allied bombing raids.

There has been no mention of when it might come back on stream.

Iraq's domestic consumption of crude oil before the war was 300,000 barrels per day.

Meanwhile, the European Commission is taking seriously an appeal from banks for help in avoiding billions of dollars of potential claims by Iraq, a commission spokesman has said.

But action would have to involve other countries, he said.

EC financial services commissioner Sir Leon Brittan and External Relations Commissioner Frans Andriessen have received letters from the European Banking Federation seeking a system of licences that would avoid massive Iraqi claims against banks once United Nations sanctions were lifted.

ADB officials said huge capital

Major banks face global credit crunch, ADB says

MANILA (R) — The world banking system faces a severe credit shortage during 1991 because of the huge capital needs of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said Monday.

The combination of a credit crunch by the world banking system and sharply increased demand for capital in the USSR and eastern Europe could result, in the absence of major adjustment measures, in continued high real interest rates which would further increase the risk of recession," the ADB said in its annual report.

The Manila-based bank, comprising 50 members including the United States, European Community nations, Japan and developing Asian countries, said the fragility of the international banking system represented a major risk for the world economy, struggling to recover from the Gulf crisis.

ADB officials said huge capital

and eastern Europe, coupled with plans by Kuwait to tap financial markets for billions of dollars in reconstruction loans, could lead to a serious global capital shortage unless worldwide saving was increased.

The ADB's lending to Asian countries topped \$4 billion in 1990, according to the report.

The message of the ADB report reflected deep concern in Tokyo that world financial institutions must tackle the international shortage of capital created by the big gap between savings and demand for funds.

Japan is pressing for the Group of Seven industrialised nations meeting in London and the new European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to join major financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and ADB in helping to increase the flow of capital.

Some Asian countries have expressed fears that new interest in capitalism in eastern Europe

could siphon away money from Asia, the world's most dynamic economic region over the past decade.

ADB President Kunitomo

Tarumizu forecast in an interview with Reuters last week that real economic growth in the developing nations of Asia would slow to around 5.0 per cent in 1991 from

5.7 per cent last year because of

the Gulf crisis and the recession in the United States and some other industrialised countries.

He said Japan should help cushion the impact on Asian economies of slower world growth by further deregulating its economy and liberalising trade.

Japan's trade surplus hit its highest level in two years in March, reaching \$4.7 billion from \$3.7 billion a year earlier.

The ADB report, released ahead of the bank's annual meeting in Vancouver on April 24-26, said growth in industrialised countries was expected to be significantly lower in 1991 and world trade would slow.

Oil prices were forecast to average \$20 a barrel in 1991, about the same as last year, although they would remain highly volatile.

"In 1992, an average price above \$20 per barrel is unlikely," it added.

It said among Asia's tiger economies, rising inflation and a worsening domestic climate might clip real growth in South Korea's gross domestic product (GDP) to 7.0 to 7.5 per cent in 1991, from 8.5 per cent last year.

Singapore's growth would also fall about 2.0 per cent from 6.0 per cent last year, but Hong Kong and Taiwan would probably do better than last year.

China's economy would post GDP growth of around five per cent, the same as last year, it said.

Except for oil-producer Indonesia, the economies of South East Asia and the Indian subcontinent were also expected to slow, the report added. Indonesia would achieve 7.0 to 8.0 per cent GDP growth.

Economists see need for another interest rate reduction in U.S.

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. economists say further interest rate cuts are needed to stimulate the economy and the task may be easier now inflation appears to have come under control.

Many economists had expected the Federal Reserve (Fed) bank to lower the key discount rate which it charges banks for loans, on Friday, after the release of the best monthly inflation report in nearly five years.

The discount rate is currently six per cent.

The Labour Department reported that the consumer price index (CPI) fell 0.1 per cent in March, the first monthly decline since April 1986 when prices fell 0.4 per cent.

Wall Street investors thought this would clear the way for cheaper credit. Stock prices rose substantially following the release of the CPI report.

But shares lost much of their gains by midday on Friday when the Fed signalled interest rates would stay put by draining money from the banking system. The Dow Jones industrial average recovered to close up 15 points as investors figured easier credit

would be likely soon.

Many economists said the CPI report should ease fears of some policymakers that lower rates would reignite a fresh round of inflation once recovery begins. But policymakers may be waiting for signs of further economic weakness before another rate cut, they added.

"They have got the green light if they see something weak but they still have not stepped on the accelerator yet," said Martin Riegel, chief economist for the National Council of Savings Institutions.

The central bank has been lowering rates since late last year to prop the economy out of recession. On March 9 the Fed pushed the federal funds rate down a quarter of a percentage point to bring it to six per cent, level with the discount rate.

The federal funds rate is the interest banks charge each other for loans and is directly influenced by the Fed.

A number of economists believe another cut is warranted.

"The economy needs a little push, because it is not obvious that the increase in consumer confidence is going to do it," said

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★ KAFROON

Show: 11:30, 1:30 p.m.

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(Arabic)

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Tel: 634144

★ DICK TRACY

Show: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Soviet Georgia elects first president with wide powers

MOSCOW (R) — Parliament in breakaway Soviet Georgia Sunday boosted the republic's independence bid by electing nationalist leader Zviad Gamsakhurdia as its first executive president.

Deputies in the chamber rose to their feet clapping and cheering after the vote appointing Gamsakhurdia, who had ruled the southern republic as head of parliament since November, local journalists in the capital Tbilisi said.

The 209 deputies present also voted to give Gamsakhurdia widespread powers, including the right to appoint the government and declare a state of war in the republic, which declared independence from the Soviet Union last week.

Gamsakhurdia's election will strengthen his hand in the battle of wills against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, who is struggling to prevent the country from disintegrating.

"Since the situation in Georgia is extreme, and they consider

themselves to be at war with the centre, they feel it necessary to have a president with legitimate executive powers," one journalist said.

Gamsakhurdia will stay in his post until May 26, when direct presidential elections will be held throughout the southern republic of five million people.

The local parliament has yet to pass a law on how the May 26 elections will be carried out, but local journalists said it was likely Gamsakhurdia would serve for five years if elected.

Gamsakhurdia, 52, announced the start of republic-wide strikes Wednesday as part of a campaign to drive Soviet troops from the disputed region of South Ossetia.

The region's autonomous status was abolished shortly after nationalists swept the Communists from power last October in the first free elections for 70 years.

Since then more than 50 people have been killed in continuing armed clashes between Georgians and South Ossetians who

want to remain part of the Soviet Union.

Hardliners in Moscow have accused nationalist leaders in several republics, notably Russia and the Baltics, of pursuing separatist policies opposed by their populations.

The huge Russian Federation, whose populist leader Boris Yeltsin is also locked in a power struggle with Gorbachev, plans to hold similar presidential elections on June 12, which Yeltsin is likely to win.

Gamsakhurdia, who spent many years in prison before Gorbachev came to power, can now only be dismissed if found guilty of treason. He has the right to cancel decisions taken by the government and various ministers.

"The president has the right to declare a state of war in the whole republic or any part of it... he can impose temporary presidential rule," read the draft law passed by deputies.

Deputies also decided that the republic's president — who has to

be between 35 and 70 years old — would not be allowed to serve as the head of parliament. Gamsakhurdia was expected to resign his old post in the next few days.

Gamsakhurdia, who will form the republic's parliament — until now officially called the Supreme Soviet of Georgia — will henceforth be known as the Georgian Parliament.

The Soviet parliament has urged Gorbachev to declare a state of emergency in South Ossetia.

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Oil tanker sinks off Italy

ARENZANO, Italy (R) — A supertanker whose cargo of a million barrels of oil threatens the Mediterranean's worst ecological disaster, sank off the Italian riviera Sunday after burning for three days.

The 109,000-tonne tanker Haven was rocked by a strong explosion earlier Sunday and slid under a sheet of black oil less than five hours later off this small fishing port at 10:05 a.m. (0805 GMT).

At the site of the wreck, there was no immediate sign of any surge of oil from the tanker after it went down.

Experts who went out to inspect the site of the sinking said the Cypriot-registered tanker had apparently stopped leaking oil.

"Our planes are surveying the area right now," a spokesman for the anti-pollution emergency centre said.

Commander Giuseppe Telmon, chief inspector of Italian harbours, earlier said that if the ship's tanks remained intact after sinking, they could be capped underwater to allow salvage operations to begin.

Experts estimate that the tanker, which originally carried 143,000 tonnes of thick Iranian crude, had already lost 40,000 to 60,000 tonnes of its cargo by the time it sank but said most of it had burned up.

If their estimate is wrong and the whole cargo of one million barrels of crude gets into the sea, it would be Europe's worst oil spill since the Amoco Cadiz disaster of France in March 1978 when 1.6 million barrels ruined the beaches of Brittany.

Italy declared the Haven spill a national emergency Saturday as traces of oil started washing up on nearby beaches on the scenic riviera.

The environmentalist group Greenpeace said its helicopter had sighted oil slicks Sunday totalling around 25 square kilometres slowly moving towards the Ligurian coast.

Gorbachev, Yeltsin's arch rival in nearly a year of political manoeuvring, was also due to leave for the Soviet Far East en route to Japan where he hopes to win economic aid.

Yeltsin was speaking in a radio interview Saturday on the eve of a visit to France as a six-week-old miners' strike and other labour unrest pushed the Soviet economy closer to collapse.

Yeltsin told Radio Russia that Gorbachev owed it to the country to hold "round table" talks with all political forces, including striking miners who demand his resignation.

"Sitting at that round table should be Gorbachev, Yeltsin and other representatives of the republics," he said.

"And representatives of the Communist Party and other parties, movements and strike movements, including the miners. Does this question need to be resolved somehow? Yes it does. Otherwise that will be it. The country will disintegrate."

The attack Saturday by a forum of Islamic religious parties led by Sharif's allies came two days after the government introduced a Sharia bill in the parliament's lower house.

The forum was also unhappy with Sharif for delaying the presentation of another promised bill to amend the constitution to facilitate Sharia's enforcement.

The bill, which must be passed by both houses of parliament to become law, declares Sharia to be Pakistan's supreme law, but gives few clues how this would work.

A forum resolution denounced the legislation as a "slaughtered, tattered bill" and called for the adoption of a stronger bill proposed by fundamentalists.

The forum picked on the bill's provision for honouring existing financial contracts and international obligations to accuse Sharif of seeking to retain the system of paying interest for three more years. It says interest is banned by Islam.

"On the one hand Sharif is declared the supreme law and on the other continuation of interest is being guaranteed," the resolution said.

"Continuing the interest-based economy, according to Koranic injunctions, is a declaration of war against Allah and Allah's Prophet and negates the claim of making (Pakistan) an Islamic welfare state."

The fundamentalists were instrumental in last year's election victory by Sharif's Islamic Democratic Alliance (IDA). The alliance defeated Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which they accused of being anti-Sharia.

After Sharif took office in November, he has been pressuring him to fulfil his campaign pledge to enforce Sharia through a harsher bill they proposed.

But Sharif presented a bill of his own, which appears to sidestep fundamentalist demands for a new Islamic judiciary which could overrule parliament.

Sharif said in a speech last week he was not a fundamentalist and would not block modernisation — a remark which irritated the religious forum and prompted the fundamentalists to demand an explanation.

But the comment won him praise from Bhutto, who said her People's Democratic Alliance would cooperate if the prime minister introduced non-fundamentalist bills.

During the morning session the ministers will study draft treaties circulated by Luxembourg to try

Violence rages as South Africa debates future



Nelson Mandela

sal suffrage, a bill of rights and an independent judiciary provided a useful basis for "the most important debate in this country's history."

The Sunday Star said the ANC proposals cleared the way for early agreement on the shape of the new South Africa.

On the far right, the stanchly pro-apartheid and white Conservative Party (CP) was reported to be considering joining constitutional negotiations with its archfoes the ANC, and the government.

Newspapers said CP leaders Andries Treurnicht had ordered the drafting of proposals which included an acknowledgment that most "whites" supported De Klerk's dismantling of apartheid.

"We have to accept the days of apartheid are numbered," the proposals said. De Klerk's reforms had wide support because they would lead to resumption of sports tours and an end to sanctions.

Finance Minister Barend du Plessis, in an interview in the Sunday Times, said international sanctions had contributed to the recession which threatened to plunge South Africa into anarchy four years.

"There will be so many jobless people that you will have an ungovernable situation. There will be teeming millions who will have no jobs," du Plessis said, adding the political instability was scaring away investors.

IRA, stung by killings, steps up violent campaign

DUBLIN (R) — The IRA, stung into retaliation by a wave of Protestant sectarian shootings, has stepped up its guerrilla campaign and plunged Northern Ireland into another round of "tit-for-tat" killings.

"It is a vicious circle with no end," a top Northern Ireland police officer said Sunday after one of the bloodiest weeks of the year.

The Irish Republican Army (IRA), battling to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, shot dead two Protestants, killed two policemen and used a woman as a "human bomb" to attack a police station with a primed bomb in her handbag.

The IRA's renewed offensive followed 12 killings this year by Protestant extremists from the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) whose targets ranged from four Catholic customers in a country

bar to two teenage girls serving in a mobile sweet shop.

The IRA always argues it is a liberation army that never targets Protestants for purely sectarian reasons.

But two of its protestant victims this week had no connection with British security forces or with any outlawed Protestant paramilitary group.

Security chiefs fear the latest attacks could plunge Northern Ireland back into the carnage of the 1970s when religion was often the only reason for targeting a victim.

"The UVF is just as callous as the IRA. This could be a never-ending cycle of violence," the senior officer warned. The death that most shocked Northern Ireland last week was the IRA killing of Protestant Derek Ferguson, shot while watching television with his two young sons.

1st ever robbery shakes village

OSLO (AP) — Police in the Norwegian fishing village of Svolvaer are investigating something unusual: A serious crime. Svolvaer, a peaceful town of 5,000, experienced its first armed robbery, police said. A masked man robbed the local post office of 23,000 kroner (\$3,500) at gunpoint, said Ingrid Solli, of the local police. "This is an island, so

the news over his involvement as a director in a financial institution which went bankrupt with big losses. Reporters swamped Menem with questions about his family, some of whose members have been named in a judicial investigation marking his return from a visit to Germany. "Let me answer like President Bush did when he was asked about his son Neil's judicial troubles. It's a problem of Neil Bush and the courts and not of the U.S. government." Neil Bush has been in the news over his involvement as a director in a financial institution which went bankrupt with big losses. Reporters swamped Menem with questions about his family, some of whose members have been named in a judicial investigation marking his return from a visit to Germany. "Let me answer like President Bush did when he was asked about his son Neil's judicial troubles. It's a problem of Neil Bush and the courts and not of the U.S. government." 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